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COSMOPOLITAN

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Gouverneur Morris and the Short Story

IT is true that Gouverneur Morris is going to write short stories exclusively for *Cosmopolitan* throughout the year 1916, but this is not an announcement of the fact. Instead, it is a paragraph of straight-out tribute to Mr. Morris, written because that is just the way we feel about it. We are going to tell only what is known in every magazine office and to the whole circle of writing folks. Also, that is just the reason we are going to tell it, because often that's the news the public never gets. Here, very simply, it is: Gouverneur Morris is looked upon by his fellow writers as a master craftsman of the short story. They admire his technique; they salute his bold and graceful imagery. Whatever sort of theme he chooses—and no living author attempts so great a variety—he turns out a short story whose interest and charm are heightened by the exquisite art of the telling. He may take a tender, youthful romance, a tragedy of mature passion, or some strange phantasy—the result is always an absorbing narrative. The public recognized the charm, the sympathy, and the power of the Gouverneur Morris story of its own accord, and crowned the author with its favor. This always has meant success, but not always the second crown bestowed by critical fellow artists. So the case of Gouverneur Morris, wearing both these high favors, is unusual. And if you think it isn't, try to send us a few parallels from the history of modern literature.

The Ladders of Hesitation, the first of the Gouverneur Morris series, will appear in February *Cosmopolitan*.



A GOOD SPORT

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Illustrated by John Alonzo Williams

I WAS a little lad, and the older boys called to me from the pier.

They called to me: "Be a sport; be a sport! Leap in and swim!"

I leaped in and swam, though I had never been taught a stroke. Then I was made a hero, and they all shouted: "Well done!

Well done,

Brave boy; you are a sport, a good sport!"

And I was very glad

But now I wish I had learned to swim the right way,

Or had never learned at all.

Now I regret that day,

For it led me to my fall

I was a youth, and I heard the older men talking of the road to wealth.

They talked of bulls and bears, of buying on margins.

And they said: "Be a sport, my boy; plunge in and win, or lose it all!

It is the only way to fortune."

So I plunged in and won; and the older men patted me on the back,

And they said, "You are a sport, my boy, a good sport!"

And I was very glad.





But now I wish I had lost all I ventured on that day—

Yes, wish I had lost it all.
For it was the wrong way,
And pushed me to my fall.

I was a young man, and the gay world called me to come.
Gay women and gay men called to me, crying: "Be a sport;
be a good sport!"

Fill our glasses and let us fill yours.
We are young but once; let us dance and sing.
And drive the dull hours of night until they stand at bay
Against the shining bayonets of day."
So I filled my glass, and I filled their glasses over and over again,
And I sang and danced and drank, and drank and danced and
sang.

And I heard them cry, "He is a sport, a good sport!"
As they held their glasses out to be filled again.
And I was very glad.

*Oh, the madness of youth and song and dance and wine,
Of woman's eyes and lips, when the night dies in the arms of dawn!*

And now I wish I had not gone that way.
Now I wish I had not heard them say,
"He is a sport, a good sport!"
For I am old who should be young.
The splendid vigor of my youth I flung
Under the feet of a mad, unthinking throng.
My strength went out with wine and dance and song;
Unto the winds of earth I tossed like chaff,
With idle jest and laugh.
The pride of splendid manhood, all its wealth
Of unused power and health,
Its dream of looking in some pure girl's eyes
And finding there its earthly paradise,
Its hope of virile children free from blight,
Its thoughts of climbing to some noble height
Of great achievement—all these gifts divine
I cast away for song and dance and wine.
Oh, I have been a sport, a good sport;
But I am very sad.



John Anster Fitzgerald



From the glowing subway entrances the holiday crowds

The Woman Gives A Story of Regeneration

T EAGAN'S ARCADE stood, and in the slow upward progress of the city it may still stand, at that intersection of Broadway and Columbus Avenue where the grumbling subway and the roaring elevated meet at Lincoln Square. It covered a block, bisected by an arcade and rising six capacious stories in the form of an enormous H. On Broadway, the glass

front was given over to shops and offices, while, in the back stretches of the top stories, artists, sculptors, students, and illustrators had their studios alongside of mediums, dentists, curious business offices, and derelicts of all description.

The square was a churning meeting of contending human tides. The Italians had installed their fruit shops and their



surred up, laden with mysterious packages, scurrying home

By Owen Johnson *Illustrated by Howard Chandler Christy*

groceries; the French their florists and delicatessen shops; the Jews their clothing bazaars; the Germans their jewelers and their shoe stores; the Irish their saloons and restaurants, while from Heaney's, one of the most remarkable meeting-grounds in the city, they dominated the neighborhood.

The Arcade, which had stood like a great glass barn, waiting the inevitable

advance of stone reconstruction, looked down on this rushing stream of all nations. It was a place where no questions were asked and no advice permitted; where, if you found a man wandering in the long, drafty corridors, you piloted him to his room and put him to bed and did not seek to reform him in the morning. This was its etiquette. There were the young

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and unafraid, who were coming up blithely, and the old and tired, who were going down, and it was understood that those who were bent on their own destruction should do it in their own chosen way—a place where souls in hunger and souls in despair met momentarily and passed.

In the whole city there was not such another incongruous gathering of activities. There was a vast billiard-parlor and a theater; a barber shop and shoe parlors; a telegraph station and an ice-cream-and-candy shop, thronged at the luncheon-hour with crowds of schoolboys; there was also a millinery shop and one for fancy goods; a clock-maker, and two corner saloons. Above, in the lower lofts, every conceivable mercantile oddity was assembled.

Higher up, on the fifth and particularly on the sixth floor, where the lofts had been transformed into dwelling-rooms and studios, a queer collection had settled and clung tenaciously. For years, oppressed by the vastness and gloom of the reverberating corridors, they had gone on living solitary lives, barely nodding to each other, as though each had a secret to bury (which, indeed, was often true), and they might have continued thus indefinitely, had it not been for two events—the accident of King O'Leary's meeting Tootles, and the mystery of Dangerfield's coming to the corner studio—two unifying events that brought the little group of human stragglers on the sixth floor into a curious fraternity that persisted for several years, and was fated to affect several destinies profoundly.

I

It was Christmas eve in Lincoln Square. A fine snow was sifting out of the leaden night, coating the passers-by with silver. From the glowing subway entrances, the holiday crowds surged up, laden with mysterious packages, scurrying home for the decking out of tinsel trees and the plotting of Christmas surprises. The shop windows flared through the crowds so brightly that they seemed to have brought up electric reenforcements. The restaurants were crowded with brilliant garlands, gay with red berries and festal ribbons, while amid the turbulent traffic of the avenues, impudent little taxi-cabs went scooting merrily, with rich glimpses of heaped-up boxes inside.

At Heaney's, under the strident elevated

station, a few guests were entering the blazing dining-rooms, laughing and expectant. For one merry hour in the long, grinding year, united in the unselfish spirit of revelry, the metropolitan crowd bumped good-humoredly on its way, gay with the democracy of good cheer.

King O'Leary left the throng at the bar at Heaney's, whistling loudly to himself, flung a half-dollar to the blind news-dealer under the elevated steps, calling with gruff gusto, "Merry Christmas!" and, resuming his whistling, crossed the square to Teagan's Arcade.

If King O'Leary continued to whistle with exaggerated gaiety, tricking himself into a set smile, it was because, deep in his heart, he felt the irresistible closing-in of his black hour. As he neared the glass descent into the rumbling underground, a flurried eruption of parcel-laden crowds whirled momentarily about him, wrapping him around with youth, laughter, and the aroma of friendship and affection. Home! He felt it so keenly; he saw so clearly rising before him a hundred visions of family groups gathered in the warmth of cozy houses; he felt so out of it, so socially excommunicated, that his pretense at gaiety flattened out. The world, for this one night, had run away from him. In the whole city he could think of no door where he could leave a present or imagine from what direction one might descend upon him. With the exception of the half-dollar flung to the blind news-dealer, and a few tips jingling in his pockets, his Christmas giving was over. Twice a year, in his happy-go-lucky existence, rolling down incredible avenues of life from Singapore to Nome, Alaska, meeting each day with unfailing zest, leader and boon companion through whatever crowds he passed—twice a year, at Christmas and on a certain day in mid-April, the secret of which lay buried in his memory, King O'Leary went down into the dark alleys of remembrance.

He entered the Arcade, which was like a warm, friendly furnace after the wet, shivering snow-flurries.

"Lord, but this is awful!" he said solemnly, gazing absent-mindedly into the glowing tonsorial parlors inscribed "Joey Shine." "Wish the deuce I could think of some one to give a present to!"

All at once he perceived the manicurist, a tall, Amazonian young lady, with reddish

hair coiled in amazing tangles, who was examining him with friendly curiosity. He came out of his abstraction, wondered where he had seen her, half smiled, and went slowly on his way to the elevator, an old-fashioned vehicle which came settling down like an ancient barge.

"Merry Christmas, Mistah O'Leary!"

"Back to you, Sam!" he said, dropping a dollar in the box which was conspicuously advertised. And he added, "Up six."

"Thank you, sah; *thank you!*" said Sam, whose eyeballs rolled whitely at the magnificence of the tip.

The twin elevators in the Arcade were sleepy affairs, unoppressed by a sense of time, while the voyage upward was never guaranteed. They were large, open, cage-like affairs, littered with announcements: rooms to be sublet or to be shared; trousers pressed and old clothes bought; washing cheaply offered; instruction in typewriting and stenography; dental parlors; the future foretold and confidential advice given at reasonable rates by Madame Probasco on the fifth floor.

Sam lingered a moment, as though to coax forth another passenger from the shadows. This failing, he shuffled out for a languid survey of the Arcade.

"No hurry here," said O'Leary, yawning indifferently and settling into the cushioned chair which soothed the attendant in his weary hours. Thus encouraged, Sam lounged away for a final reconnoitering, slouched back, vacillated a moment on one foot, and had his hand on the sliding gate, when out of the dusk came a hallo in a high, nasal English accent.

"I say there, Sassafras, my man, hold him in!"

Sam began laughing immediately, in a thin, treble, body-shaking laugh,

"He-he-he, Mr. Kidder; I sartainly knew you was coming—yassah!"

A young fellow, barely five feet six, with the figure of a jockey, hopped into the car, and, seizing the regulator, rattled off:

"Cast away there! Smartly now, my man; smartly! Take in your spinnaker! Ship the maintop-gallant sheets!"

In response to this rapid salvo, the elevator began to budge, rising at about the rate of six inches a second.

"Do you think we can make it?" said Kidder, with assumed alarm. "How's the old scow to-night, mate?"

"Why, most surprisin' well—yassah, most surprisin'."

"It's a stormy night, and there's a bad reef above the fourth. Well, mate, we're in the hands of Providence. Its will be done!" All at once, seeming to perceive King O'Leary for the first time, he inquired anxiously, "Excuse me, sir; does my presence at the helm cause you any anxiety?"

"Not here," said King O'Leary, tricked out of his glumness.

"What floor can I serve you, sir?"

"The sixth will be about right for me."

"Then we sink or swim, survive or perish together!"

He was dapperly dressed, and though his yellowish checks were evidently ready-made, they were squeezed in at the waist and hoisted over the ankles in the latest style. He had the hatchet face of the clever Yankee, alert, sharply defined, with a high-bridged and rather bold English nose.

"Youngster looks like a pocket edition of the Duke of Wellington," thought King O'Leary, registering his favorable impressions, and, before the other's infectious spirits, he began to recover his natural zest.

Tootles—to give Mr. St. George Kidder at once his workaday name—meanwhile had been examining his companion with the impressionable eye of the artist. He saw the bulky body of a man approaching middle age, yet full of rough, brawny substance and weather-tried endurance. The great half-moon of a mouth was now turning up in its usual indomitable attitude toward life under the broad-spaced, jovial nose set between full cheeks breaking into dimples. Underneath wisps of tawny hair, rather Mephistophelian, were clear-blue eyes. The whole had a combination of companionable good humor and instant aggression when necessary.

"Rather a rough nun in case of a scrap, I should fancy," thought Tootles, who had his own way of expressing things. "However, he has a sense of humor—of my humor—which is distinctly in his favor."

Suddenly he exclaimed aloud:

"Whoa there! All hands on deck. Stand by the life-boats!"

The elevator, having drifted gradually past one dark floor after the other, had now come to a jolting stop between the third and the fourth, and began to churn up and down in a manner distinctly alarming.

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"Sassafras, you're feeding Tessie too much red meat," said Tootles, shifting his metaphors as Sam came to the rescue.

Another moment of joggling and bucking, and the elevator suddenly glided up and came to a rest at the sixth floor.

"Whew! My eyes and whiskers!" exclaimed Tootles, springing out.

He turned, with an air of grave solicitude.

"Sassafras, I do believe I forgot to pay the chauffeur. Small change, you know, is such a nuisance. I'm going to let you be my banker for a couple of days. Give him a liberal tip. And oh, yes, if Mrs. Van Astorbilt calls again this evening, tell her I have gone to the country—but discreetly, Sassafras, discreetly, in your best manner. Remember—she is a woman, like your mother."

O'Leary and Tootles moved down the spacious, murky corridor of the sixth floor back. There was a moment of silence, and then Tootles heaved a prodigious sigh.

"Say, this is a hell of a place on Christmas eve, isn't it?"

"Why, boy, I didn't know it hit you that way!" said King O'Leary, surprised.

"It sure does. Christmas comes but once a year, when it comes it brings good cheer!" Yes, it does!"

He stopped at the door which bore the inscription: "No Models Wanted."

King O'Leary reluctantly continued further up the bare hallway to his room.

"I say, over there!"

O'Leary turned.

"Well, son, what is it?"

"Merry Christmas, and all that sort of thing, you know!"

"Merry Christmas?" said the other, as though trying it on his ear, and a loud guffaw followed. "Yes; it'll be a merry Christmas—I think—NOT!"

King O'Leary turned the lock and flung open the door on the dim solitude of his room. Then he threw on the electric light, and each bare detail came suddenly out—a cot with the cover still turned down, a wash-stand, and an upright piano with an armchair before it. In one corner was a low hair trunk, reenforced with leather, of the make sailors were wont to use.

He closed the door, whistling gloomily, went over to the piano, and struck a few aimless chords.

"Anywhere else in civilization, a white man could speak to another on such a

night as this; but in this God-forsaken wilderness, I suppose they'd think I was after their watch."

He turned again to the keyboard, and, playing by ear with a truly sensitive touch, ran into the *Feuer Motif* of "Die Walküre."

"God, that's great!" he said solemnly. "That is it—earth, fire, and water!" He tried another start—shut the piano viciously and rose. "Damn New York!" he said, peering out at the opposite side of the court, with its chilly, bare outline. "Dozens of poor devils sitting around nursing their misery and afraid to say hello to another human being. Danged if I don't try it!" he said, all at once, and, slapping on his hat, he went out of his room and up to the corner studio, near which a dozen boxes were piled. "I'll try each in turn," he said grimly, and knocked.

But a moment's pounding convinced him that the studio was unoccupied, and he turned to the opposite door, which lay next to his, and rapped on it as though to summon forth a spirit. The door opened, and a young woman appeared.

"My name's King O'Leary," he said desperately, taking off his hat. "I'm looking for some mortal being, man, woman or child, who's as plumb lonely as I am, to go out and help me through this night. I'm not a thug or a pickpocket, and I'm not fresh. Anywhere else, people would understand me. Well, how about it? I suppose you think I'm crazy?"

She stood a little defensively, her hands behind her back in an attitude which seemed to bar the way into the studio, which lay behind, warm and inviting with the charm her feminine touch had laid over its crude outlines. Her hat and coat were on a nearby chair. Though she stood against the light, he was struck with the oddity of her appearance—a certain defiant, youthful erectness in her body, the depth of darkness that lay over her in the black of her hair, which was braided and coiled about her forehead, and the brown oval of the face—brown as an Indian's.

"You're in the room next to me, aren't you—you're the one who was playing?" she said, in a matter-of-fact tone, and her voice was gutturally pleasant, so different from the high-pitched excitement of the New Yorker.

"Yes; I'm just about twenty miles away," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "Well, I suppose I'm letting myself in for a throw-

down, but here goes. Honestly, I mean what I say. I'm stranded here—don't know a soul. I'm just craving for some one to talk to. Fact. If you're in the same box and can size a man up for what he is, why—" he added, in an embarrassed rush, aware by the white gleam of her teeth that the girl was watching him, amused at his embarrassment—"I say, what do you do to a man who has the nerve to knock on your door and ask you to go out to dinner?"

"I'm sorry."

"Oh, yes; that's what I expected. Well, I meant it all right," he said ruefully.

"That's not what I mean," she said. "I'm sorry, but I'm going out to dinner."

As she said this she seemed to relax, as though satisfied of the sincerity of his appeal, and, turning, for the first time the light fell clear across her face. What the color of her eyes was in the daytime he did not know, only now, in the darkness and the artificial light, there was something luminous and deep and full, and yet they struck him as a sort of barrier held against those who sought to read deeper. These eyes looked straight into his, quiet, restrained—not quite the eyes of a young girl nor yet the eyes of a woman. The whole swift impression on him was of some one quite unlike the rest, an inflexibility of purpose, something decisive in look and attitude, and something withheld—a flash of elfin wildness cruelly mastered.

"I beg your pardon," he said, conscious that he had looked too intently; and he added, in blunt tribute, "Yes, of course, you would be going somewhere."

"I'm sorry," she said; and this time she smiled, a smile like the woman curiously devoid of surface coquetry and yet, at the same time, haunting the imagination.

"Do you mean you would have come?" he said eagerly.

"Of course," she said.

"Lord, this looks human!" he said, hungrily glancing into the studio. "Wish you could see the cell I'm in. I'd like—well, just to get the feeling of it. May I step in—just a moment?"

She studied his face intently.

"Just a minute, then," she said, but she remained by the open door.

King O'Leary strode into the room over the grateful softness underneath.

"Rugs!" he said ecstatically, and he put his head back as though to inhale the wel-

come odor of a home. "Lord, I can just smell it!"

He stood, hat in hand, his face glowing, surveying the blending shades of gray and green, the subdued glow of the table-lights, the grateful touches of warm colors here and there, and the easel covered with a cloak of mellow golden velvet.

"You're an artist?" he said.

"Yes."

She made no move to question him, watching him with a quiet sense of dignity that seemed to accord him what he needed and no more. He turned regretfully from his contemplation.

"You're sure about dinner?"

"Yes."

He wanted to shake hands, but her attitude did not seem to permit it. He made a last attempt.

"Say, if I annoy you with my pounding—just rap on the wall and shut me up."

"I like it."

"Really—anything in particular?"

"No; I like it all."

"I'm glad of that." He hesitated again, moved toward the door. "I'm sorry about that dinner." She nodded, and he thought she was still watching him with her disconcerting amusement. "Good luck!"

The door closed, leaving King O'Leary, who had met women, good, bad, and indifferent, in many climes and held his own with Irish audacity, so thoroughly perplexed that he stood staring at the warm light playing on the glass of the door a long moment before he squared his shoulders and advanced to the next test.

II

TOOTLES shared the studio, which was a curiosity in itself, and a sort of refuge for indigent artists, transient reporters, and just plain-a-day human beings, with Mr. Flick Wilder, who numbered among his activities (without tarrying overlong in any) journalism, all grades of publicity and press-work, advance agent, and odd theatrical jobs, special stories, and occasionally minor editorial positions, briefly held. As he aspired to a liberal position in the literary world—and by liberal he understood a position in which he should originate the ideas that others were laboriously to execute—he had decided to take up as a steady profession (steady being used in a relative sense) the

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occupation of jokesmith, or joke-cracker, as he himself termed it, as one which necessitated only a trifling expense in the shape of a note-book, developed the memory, and made the companionship of witty associates a lucrative necessity. He pounded out the pun ordinary by the dozen for the comic weeklies at fifty cents an item. He dressed up anecdotes skimmed from current journalism, and fitted them to celebrities, a process which he termed "developing the property." He tagged an inscription to a cartoon and supplied ideas for others *ad libitum*, and occasionally, by astutely padding two lines into a paragraph or a paragraph into a section, realized the colossal sum of five dollars. Daily contemplation of all things in their humorous possibilities had settled upon him a fixed gravity, a sort of distant look in the eyes, of seeking to determine whether the last man had uttered anything of value, and where others broke into laughter he resorted to his note-book. He had seen many sides of New York in the periodic lapses which kept him constantly in search of a new profession. He had a play and a novel which he intended to complete. In tribute to this literary productivity, he liked to refer to himself as "Literature," while addressing Tootles as "Art."

Their association had come about six months previously in a quite accidental manner. Tootles, who was of extravagant tastes, was immersed in a fit of hard work, in an effort to catch up with the rent, which, though only thirty dollars a month, was beyond his powers of concentration. He was at his easel, finishing up a series of commercial sketches depicting certain Olympian young men, beautiful as men are not, lolling on the seashore in the new spring styles of Wimpfheimer & Goldfinch's twenty-five-dollar suits—a degradation which he endured against the day when the galleries of the world should contend for his masterpieces.

The door was open, and there abruptly entered the room, and, by the same token, his own immediate existence, Mr. Flick Wilder, a sandy-haired, freckled Westerner, with a watery eye and an impudent tilt to his nose, a heavy, thirsty underlip, about thirty, of middle height but abnormally thin.

"Hello, kid!" said Mr. Wilder, with a friendly though suspiciously enthusiastic greeting.

"Hello, you human hatpin!" Tootles retorted. "What's your line of goods?"

"Did I hear you ask me in?" said Wilder,

"No agents need apply," said Tootles, in warning. "However, can you lend me five?"

From long contact, he had adopted a defensive formula: In case of doubt, touch the other man first.

"I can," said the other, accepting this as an invitation to enter.

Tootles repeated sternly,

"Come now; what's your line of goods?"

"I have a camel," said the other.

"A what?"

"A camel."

"I don't want any toys."

"It's a real camel."

"Thanks. I'm only interested in getting goats," said Tootles sarcastically.

Whereupon, his visitor immediately drew out a memorandum-book, and jotted down a note. Then he said,

"Want you to ride it."

"Oh, you do—eh?"

"And if ten dollars means anything to you, kiddo—look this over."

Whereupon he took two five-dollar bills from a sizable roll and flaunted them conspicuously on the table. The aspect of ready money had always a convincing effect upon Tootles. He looked at Wilder, and then went to the door and looked out suddenly, suspecting a hoax. He came back warily, forgetting his English accent, which he had laboriously imitated in admiration of a certain vaudeville hero.

"Say, what kind of a game is this?"

"Money talks, doesn't it?"

"A camel?"

"You don't believe I've got a camel, do you?" said Wilder. "Come here."

They went to the window and craned out. Below, in the street, surrounded by a swarm of newsboys, was indubitably a camel. Up to this moment, Tootles had remained incredulous. Now he began to feel a rising excitement.

"How about the cops," he said, at once.

Wilder exhibited a permit.

"It's a publicity dodge—see!" he explained. "New show at Coney. If I can make Times Square at five o'clock, a bunch of the boys are primed up for a big story."

"Why don't you ride him yourself," said Tootles, in a last objection.

"I can't. I'm too sober," said Flick, with a discouraged shake of his head.



by HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY

He wanted to shake hands, but her attitude did not seem to permit it. He made a last attempt.
"Say, if I annoy you with my pounding—just rap on the wall and shut me up"

They descended to the sidewalk.

"How'll I get up?" said Tootles, craning his neck.

This was a puzzler. Wilder reflected.

"I had a trained slave who could make him kneel," he explained, "but I lost Abu over on Ninth Avenue—the drunken rascal!"

Finally they maneuvered Elsie against the side of a truck, and Tootles scrambled into place, amid the jeers of the neighborhood. Wilder placed himself courageously at the head, with the leading-strap, and they started. Unfortunately it was only four o'clock, and he did not wish to reach his rendezvous before five, and, in a luckless moment, he decided to cross the park and explore the East Side. This, too, might have resulted without accident had not Flick, whose sense of geography was becoming misty, happened to remember Abu, and stopped at each saloon to conduct a personal search, despite the frantic remonstrances of Tootles, who did not relish these moments of lonely and lofty splendor. Elsie, the camel, however, was of a sociable, man-loving nature, and no harm might have come had not Wilder, whose sobriety was perceptibly being cured, remembered, as a humane man with an investigating turn of mind, that Elsie must be getting thirsty, and offered her a can of foaming beer.

The consequence was that the camel suddenly awoke and assumed the direction of the party, heading due east at an accelerated pace, despite Tootles' objurgations and Flick's frantic efforts to head her off. The rest was a painful memory—a weird, reeling flight of excited tenements, balking horses, swearing policemen, and a sudden entangling plunge into an Italian wedding, while Tootles, hanging to the top of a providential lamp-post, saw Flick, Elsie, policemen, and wedding-party rolling away in a whirling mist.

A week later, Flick Wilder reappeared, having beaten his way back from Buffalo, where he had landed, he knew not how, and asked shelter, while he made certain cautious inquiries as to the fate of Elsie and the propriety of a public reappearance.

From this hectic beginning, they became fast chums. Tootles, who never touched a drop, unconsciously exercised a sobering influence over Mr. Flick Wilder, gradually leading him into the paths of ambition, while following him through a series of

incredible escapades. Lonely, each in his own struggling beginning, they found a divine measure of comradeship in their exuberant youth, dreaming away at night under the stars that came down to them through the open skylight—Tootles, of fame and masterpieces; Flick of more worldly ambitions. But as these dreams, though immensely satisfying to the inner needs, had the one serious defect of not being discountable, the rent loomed over them, compelling them to the cruel necessity of doing a certain amount of work—menial, brutalizing periods, which set upon them in the closing week of the month, with consequent scurrying to editorial offices.

During the free, happy weeks, Tootles dreamed and dabbled at painting, executing lurid portraits of Belle Shaler and Pansy Hartmann, models who roomed together down the hall, and who, under promise of possessing these treasures of art, agreed to sit for him at special rates, payable at some radiant future date. Occasionally Tootles wandered into the studios of artists in the Sixty-seventh Street district for such crumbs of knowledge as they good-humoredly threw him. The truth is, he had unusual talent but too much youth. Occasionally, too, Flick Wilder, impressed with his serious view of life, would get out his copy-books, and prepare to think.

The studio was a capacious one, arranged in compromise between Flick's yearning for splendor and Tootles' feeling for the decorative in art. At first glance, it looked like a theatrical storehouse, from which parentage most of its furnishings had found their way, so that one versed in dramatic necrology would have fancied himself on the reef of last season's plays. On one side was a huge back drop depicting a sunset in the Grand Cañon, while on the other was a bucolic view of Southern plantations, secured from a broken-down troupe of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," for a price between two and three dollars. The introduction of these novel effects in mural decoration, a relic of Flick Wilder's friendship with a convivial property-man, was at first strenuously opposed by Tootles, who, however, ceded his position when Flick pertinently pointed out, first, that the bare walls were in a shocking state and could not be repainted unless one month's rent could be guaranteed in advance, and, second, that the scenery would serve as invaluable back-

grounds for the production of Wimpfheimer & Goldfinch's pastoral.

In a back corner, four property spears, from a popular failure of "Julius Cæsar," upheld a yellowish-green silk curtain which, when parted, disclosed two bunks, one above the other, for greater economy of space—Tootles occupying the more exposed position in deference to Flick's grounded habits.

The opposite corner by the windows was consecrated to Art, paint-boxes, easel, and canvases; while the home of Literature was a damaged roll-top desk from the first act of a deceased melodrama, with easy refuge at hand in a second-hand easy chair and a divan with the front spring still in good order. Another sofa and a hanging couch, burnt with pipe-ashes, were known as the guest-rooms, while the studio was artfully divided into zones by three pseudo-Japanese screens, red, yellow, and violet, which swore at everything else and at themselves. Behind one was the bathroom, so-called as a compliment to the presence of a wash-basin and running water. A second screen, with memories of "Zaza," concealed the culinary preparations when, indeed, there was anything in the larder to conceal; while behind a third was a wardrobe containing Tootles' multiple suits, which had come to him in part payment (dress suits excepted) of his services to the house of Wimpfheimer & Goldfinch.

All the electric bulbs were concealed in varicolored globes representing varieties of the fish and animal kingdom and capable of flooding the studio with red, blue, or green tints, while perched in the high, dusky corners of the ceiling were two cast-iron owls so wired that Flick, from his couch, could cause four yellowish eyes to spring out of the darkness. Finally, the pride of the floor, where it dominated gorgeously the collection of vagrant mats, was a genuine if moldy bear-rug, with which Flick had unaccountably made his appearance one night, insisting that it had attacked him without warning. Tootles was considerably worried, but a closer inspection of the animal convinced him that Flick had more probably rescued it from an ash-can than carried it off by any act of grand larceny. Consequently he set to work with enthusiasm to restore it to some of its original ferocity, and, with the aid of odd scraps of furs, succeeded in reconstructing a semblance of a body, but one of such un-

usual colors that it might have passed as a species of the Go-to-fro—that mythological animal which has the left leg shorter than the right in order that it may run around a hill the faster.

III

FLICK WILDER was stretched on his back on the shadowy couch, hands under his head, legs crossed, and one foot pointed toward the skylight.

"Hello; you here?" said Tootles, in surprise.

"Mostly."

"Sober?"

"Alas!"

"What are you mooning there on your back for?" said Tootles, turning on the pink and yellow lights.

"I'm laughing over a new joke," said Wilder, in anything but an hilarious tone.

"Good Lord, Flick, don't tell me you are in the glums, too?"

"Who're you talking to?" said Wilder, as though the question deserved no answer.

"Fellow down the hall."

"The high-life gink who is moving into the corner studio?"

"No; O'Leary—fellow next to Lady Vere de Vere," said Tootles, thus characterizing Miss Inga Sonderson, who had impressed him with her haughty aloofness.

"Oh!" Wilder slowly drew himself up and looked at Tootles. "What time?"

"Dinner-time, naturally."

"Art," said Wilder severely, "there are some sacred words which you ought to respect."

"I was just thinking how lovely it would be to sit down before a large, juicy beef-steak," said Tootles incorrigibly.

Wilder flung a slipper across the room that missed Tootles' head and clattered among the paint-brushes.

"Well, Literature, supposing there is an ice-box, is there anything in it?"

Wilder hustled, whistling, over to the window-box. He drew forth half a bottle of milk, an open tin of potted ham, and several portions of bread.

"The sardines," he said, "are for our Christmas dinner."

"Don't let's overeat," said Tootles seriously. "Flick, the stomach must be empty when the brain is full."

They sat down at the table.

"What! No finger-bowls?" said Tootles.

"Art, it's no use," said Wilder, shaking his head. "It's a bum night. Damn Christmas, anyhow!"

"Ah, but wait until Santa Claus comes," said Tootles brightly.

At this moment, as though in answer, there came two sharp raps on the door.

"Who's that?" said Wilder, startled at the coincidence.

"Santa Claus," said Tootles. "Well, come in if you're good-looking."

The door opened immediately, and King O'Leary's broad shoulders loomed out of the dusk. He stood there in his flannel shirt and loose tie, at ease from a long acquaintance with the freemasonry of men, peering in at the oddities of the studio. Then he saluted, with the curious, fluttering salute of the English private, and exclaimed,

"Hello, neighbors; am I butting in?"

"Not at all," said Tootles cheerily. "What can we do for you?" He waved a hand toward Wilder, adding: "My collaborator, the Hope of Literature, Mr. Flick Wilder."

"Glad to know you," said the new arrival, shaking hands heartily. "My name's O'Leary." And he added, grinning expectantly, "What do you collaborate in?"

"In the studio, of course," said Tootles. "I pay the rent, and he occupies it."

Wilder at once transferred this to his note-book with an appreciative nod.

"Gentlemen, this place has sort of gotten on my nerves to-night," said O'Leary, by way of explanation. "Christmas usually does. If I'm butting in, kick me out, but if you fellows have got it as bad as I have, what do you say to pooling our misery and grubbing together?"

Wilder looked at Tootles, who said with gravity, in his best English manner:

"Your idea interests me strangely; but the fact is—well, we've been out so much in society lately that we thought we'd enjoy a quiet little supper at home." King O'Leary glanced at the table; Tootles hastened to add, "No, that isn't for the canary; that is just the *hors d'œuvres*."

"Strapped?"

"That is a vulgar way of expressing it."

"Stranger, treats the crowd," said O'Leary with an easy authority. "That's the rule of the game wherever I have played. I'm asking you. Happen to have a little swell-

ing in the pocket just at present. When it's empty, which will be soon enough, why—your turn. How about it? Suppose we look each other over and size it up?"

Half an hour later they deployed from the Arcade and set out for Heaney's, grimly determined on revelry and the conquest of the glums. The Christmas crowds were still about them, homeward bound.

"They might get home at a decent hour!" said Flick indignantly.

"No turkey to-night," said Tootles. "I'm against it. My word! The thought of all those birds, plucked and skinned, thousands and thousands"—he reflected a moment—"no, hundreds of thousands—think of it!"

"Confound them, they look happy!" said Flick. "Well, anyhow, they'll all be ill to-morrow."

King O'Leary squared his shoulders and looked straight ahead, but he found a moment, as they were crossing the newsboys at the subway, to slip a shiny quarter into the fist of a pursuing urchin.

"No public stuff," he said, as he entered by the bar entrance. "A quiet corner where men can lounge and spin a yarn as they like. Here's a seat. Shove in."

They slipped into a padded nook with high backs, tucked away from the whirl of mirrors and the regimented bottles.

"What'll it be?"

"No turkey," said Tootles.

"And no cranberry sauce," added Flick.

"No, no—forget all that!"

"How about a steak?" said Tootles.

"That hits me, and we'll have it planked," said O'Leary.

"Better look at the tax," said Flick, in a burst of friendliness.

"Rot! We'll make a night of it!" said King O'Leary, with the gesture of a millionaire toward Schnapps, the veteran waiter, who grinned down at them.

"If I ordered that, they'd make me show the goods," said Tootles, in admiration. "Have you found a gold mine?"

"Hardly that."

"Been away quite a bit, haven't you?"

"Yep; just back." He paused, and, noting the curiosity written on the faces of his guests, said, "Suppose it's up to me to give an account of myself." Schnapps was back with a bottle. O'Leary poured out his glass of whisky, taking it neat, with a look of surprise at Tootles' refusal. "Water-wagon?

Always have been? Don't know but what you have the advantage— Well, lads, I suppose you're curious about me, same as I am about you. If anyone should ask me what I did, suppose I'd have to answer 'Just circulate.'

"That's what I've been doing—for I've been doing everything, and some of it is worth the telling, as you'll hear if we get to chumming. If you ask me what I like, I'd rather beat the box than eat. Don't know anything about it, but just can't help playing—natural ear. When I get short of funds, I wander in anywhere, café or vaudeville, and whip up the old pianner. Trouble with me, I suppose, is I got to roaming early. A habit now. Am never long in one spot before something comes tugging around at my shirt sleeve, and I get to dreaming of fast expressers, or sailing into blue seas, or Piccadilly on Saturday night, or the little dog-sleds up in Alasky, or something far-off and similar. I ain't quite as restless as I used to be, but just at present, why, say—if you were to suggest skipping down to Coenties Slip and shipping for Honolulu or Madagascar, I'd beat you to it."

"Do you feel that way?" said Flick, opening his eyes with delight. "Shake, my long-lost brother!"

"However, we're not shipping before the mast," said Tootles, who saw with relief the dinner arriving. "We're eating a nice, ripe, juicy steak with friend Santa Claus."

"Where from now?" said Flick, waking up.

"Had a try at Alasky, sunk it all in a bum mine and a phony partner," said O'Leary. "Got as far as Kansas City and got trimmed by a pickpocket while I snoozed. Boys, I certainly was up against it there. Had to take a job as a coachman. Mighty little I had to go on, but luck was with me. Usually is, wherever I tumble. The horses were a couple of baa-lambs that an infant could have harnessed, let alone driven. That was all right, I bluffed through that. But the old lady was a terror. The old man had struck it sudden, and she was wallowing in that carriage. She was fierce. I tell you, that month was something awful. I stood it until she drove down to the bank and paid me off, jabbing me in the back with her parasol and swearing directions under her breath. I've stood a good deal in my little canters around this globe, but I can't stand being sworn at by a fat woman on a public street."

"What did you do?" said Tootles, adding a curling strip of brown potatoes, smothered onions, and splashes of beans, peas, and carrots to each plate.

"With fifty dollars tucked away, I laid for her until out she came with a final poke in the ribs. Then I hauled in my horses, took off my livery, made her a bow, and handed it over to her with the reins, right there in the main street."

"What's the queerest job you ever landed?" said Flick, savoring the steak with gratitide.

"Queerest?" said O'Leary, scratching his head. "I've done some funny things in my time."

"Tell you what I did over in Chattanooga—in red-hot midsummer, too," said Flick, in a burst of confidence. "I was a dog-catcher."

"That certainly is going down for it," said O'Leary, grinning. "But I've got you beat. I subbed in a face-parlor."

"A what?"

"Painted out black eyes and that sort of thing. Fact—out in Chicago."

"My word!" said Tootles, overjoyed to see a beam of good humor breaking through the clouds. "I wonder that I associate with such persons."

"Leaving out the dog-catcher," said O'Leary, falling with gusto to the attack of his heaped-up plate, "I do believe, with the exception of preaching and tooth-extracting, I've tried them all. I've run a country paper. Lord! I even taught school in the Philippines to the pesky heathen. Have mined for gold, silver, copper, diamonds, and zinc, from Cripple Creek to Kimberley. I've traded and sold everything from a thousand cattle to peddling collar-buttons at the Queen's Jubilee. I've been a bartender in Paree, and into a peck of trouble, too. I've run a steam laundry in Porto Ricky and had the whole danged business washed away in a hurricane. I've dipped into a few spring revolutions in South Americky, and I rode out with Jameson in the raid that kicked out the whole African mess. Got in and out of Kimberley, and joined the Rough Riders with Teddy—here's to him! Never was much of a sailor, but I've seen my time before the mast when I stowed away for Chiny and Calcutta. Lord, where haven't I been?"

"O'Leary, you're either a hell of a big

The Woman Gives

liar or a regular fellow," said Flick cheerfully, "and, either way, I'm for you."

"Maybe I'm blowing too much," said O'Leary quietly. "But it's sort o' whistling in the wind to keep your courage up. However, I've laid my cards on the table. That's me. Well, this is starting good enough to keep it going. What do you say to taking in a show? There's something in the line of vaudeville over at the Colonial?"

"Is there so much money in the world?" said Tootles doubtfully.

"Boy, a taxi!" said King O'Leary, pounding on the table gorgeously.

The visit to the theater was the undoing of all the good work accomplished, nor could the result have been foreseen. The orchestra was comfortably filled with an indiscriminate scattering of transients, plainly marooned, and the three friends, being resolved to laughter, applauded the opening numbers with such zest that they woke up the torpid house and had the entertainers gratefully aiming their shafts in the direction of their box for the pure joy of rousing King O'Leary's soul-filling, rumbling laughter, to hear which was infection itself. The outer world, the season, and the calendar had been shut away as they roared over the grotesque tumbles and trippings of a comic acrobat, when the curtain went down, and up again on the Lovibond Sisters, "Sweet Singers from the South," who, according to the program, "would introduce sentimental favorites."

All their mirth vanished. They waited glumly through "Annie Laurie," and fidgeted as the quartet quavered into "Way down upon the Suwanee River," but when "My Old Kentucky Home" began, O'Leary got up suddenly and said,

"Hell—let's beat it!"

They emerged glumly on the sidewalk, while Flick led the way down the avenue to Campeau's, where they found a table in a noisy crowd thundered over by a dynamic orchestra.

"O'Leary, it's no use," said Flick; "we can't get away from it."

"Guess you're right."

They stayed there a long while, passing into the confidential stage, while Tootles consumed large quantities of ginger ale and sought desperately to stem the rising tide, which came rolling in blackly. They had yielded to their depression, reveling

in it. While King O'Leary listened, jerking at his fingers, Flick reminisced of forgotten days in a little Western town, of white Christmases when the relatives gathered in jingling sleighs and the table was crowned with a wild turkey at one end and a crackling pig at the other. He looked up finally, as though conscious of O'Leary's staring silence.

"I say, did you used to have pig—roast pig? No? Well, what sort of Christmas did you have?"

"There was only one that counted," said King O'Leary, frowning stubbornly, "and that, son, we won't talk about."

"Why not?" said Flick indignantly. He added, as though in his clouded brain he had found the answer, "Secret sorrow?"

"Call it that."

The news seemed to depress Flick further.

"All right. Sorry—mighty sorry! Felt that right off about you. Fact! Shake!"

Tootles watched Flick, a little maudlin, silently offer his hand to King O'Leary, who took it glumly, and abruptly arose, as though shaking off a leaden weight, saying,

"Well, I've had enough of this place."

They began to wander, east and west, up-town and down-town, seeking memory's oblivion, finding it always dogging their heels—a rapid, confused passage through lighted restaurants and noisy cafés.

Tootles, finally, after many a slip, coaxed them back to the Arcade, and woke up Sassafras, whose fee for such gala performances was half a dollar. But on the threshold of the elevator, King O'Leary suddenly remembered the alarming ascent of the afternoon.

"Six—all six at once—too much! Dangerous," he said sadly.

"I've got idea," said Flick, all at once. "No strain—you'll see—coax elevator."

Tootles, who always remained in the picture, solemnly led King O'Leary into the elevator, saying, in a soothing manner,

"It's all right, King; we all trust Flick."

Wilder was so touched by this burst of confidence that he momentarily forgot his happy thought. But all at once, he woke up and said firmly,

"Up one!"

The elevator groaned to the first floor.

"What now?" said Tootles.

"Out!" The three filed out. "Down!" He led the way down to the ground floor,

while they followed him, mystified, and into the elevator again.

"Up two!" said Flick, with the gleam of a field-marshall in his eyes. "Out! Down!"

A third time they entered the elevator, mounted to the third floor, and solemnly descended three flights and again rose to the fourth. Again at the bottom, Flick condescended to explain: "One flight at time—see? No strain. Always be kind to elevators—see? Coax elevators."

"Absolutely," said King O'Leary, with the dignity of an archbishop.

Tootles, inwardly convulsed, maintained a grave face, assuming the tense gravity of his two friends, mounting to the fifth floor and carefully descending the long stone flights. They waited solemnly for Sassafras, until the elevator sank, gleaming, to the level. Then they entered, rose to the sixth floor, and congratulated Flick.

Back in the windy corridor, with two dusky spots of light overhead and empty milk-bottles before the doors, King O'Leary was seized with a new emotion.

"Poor things—poor unforchinate things!" he said, contemplating the row of shadowy doors. "No Christmas cheer."

"No peace on earth, no good-will to men," said Flick, almost moved to tears.

"Son, we never thought—did we?"

"Never," said Flick.

"We must."

"Abso-lutely," said Flick, who had been struck by the word, and he frowned and asked, "What should we think?"

"We should think—" began King O'Leary, and stopped, lost in conjecture. He repeated, "We should think," and turned, looking to Flick for relief. "I say, what was the thing—the thing I told you we should think about?"

Wilder, thus appealed to, shook his head mournfully, and Tootles had visions of the blissful prospect of getting them safely into the studio and to bed, when, as luck would have it, King O'Leary's foot came in contact with a milk-bottle. The rolling sound revived his memory.

"Milk—milk of human kindness! Cheer—bring cheer—bring presents," said King O'Leary, getting at length to his thought. "Everyone must have presents—Christmas presents."

Tootles here interposed hastily.

"To-morrow. Good idea! To-morrow we'll get presents. Now bedtime."

This ending was unfortunate, as Tootles felt the moment he had uttered it.

"Never bedtime," said Flick indignantly.

"Presents—now—Christmas eve—Santa Claus," said King O'Leary, with equal firmness. "Go right down—now."

"Oh, go and get them!" said Tootles, in despair, and, at the end of his patience, he entered the studio and shut the door. "Well, they'll come back in about a week, I suppose," he said angrily. "Three o'clock! Lord, I've got to get some sleep!"

But, to his surprise, in about half an hour he heard them returning, having accomplished the upper trip by the same gradual process. He peered cautiously out and perceived them laden with paper bags, solemnly and reverently passing from door to door and placing before each one orange, one hazel nut, and one raisin. They entered with the satisfied serenity of good Samaritans, and, perceiving Tootles in pajamas, were immediately struck by the same idea.

"We must put the child to bed," said King O'Leary.

"Absolutely. Christmas eve. Children should be asleep—all children."

They addressed him affectionately, lifted him up tenderly, and placed him in bed (Tootles was wise enough to submit), tucked him in solicitously, and got out three stockings, which they hung up with difficulty and filled from the bags.

Tootles, peeping over the coverlet, laughed to himself at their grotesque efforts and air of concentrated seriousness, waiting until they had fallen asleep on the couches. He arose, listened to the heavy breathing a moment, and, being of an economical trend, passed into the hall to collect the oranges. At O'Leary's door he perceived the end of an envelop and drew it forth.

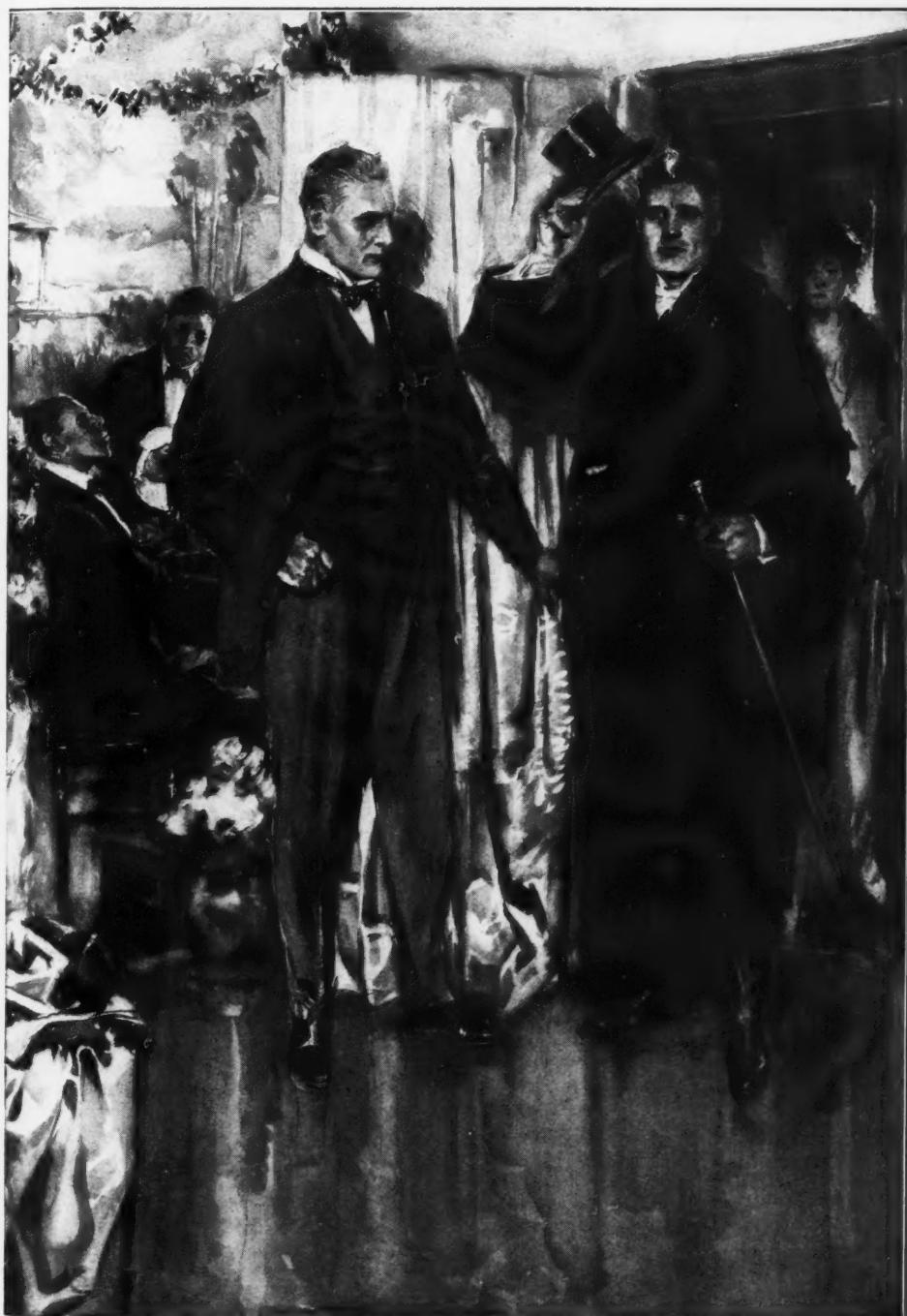
"That's queer," he said to himself, examining it. "It's neither a bill nor an advertisement. How strange!"

He placed it between his teeth and continued on his mission. But as he reached the further end of the hall, fronting Broadway, he perceived, to his amazement, that the oranges which should be there had disappeared. He stopped, with ear on edge, listening for a sound, but no sound returned. Then he went along on tiptoe, vastly intrigued. There was the door of Lorenzo P. Drinkwater, counsellor-at-law. But there was no sign of anyone's being up. Neither there, nor at the next, which bore



DRAWN BY HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY

He took off his hat slowly, as he saw the company, but in a dazed way, and stood there



blinking at them, for all the world like a great bear wandering into the glare of a camp-fire

the names of Miss Belle Shaler and Miss Pansy Hartmann.

Miss Angelica Quirley's room was likewise dark, as was the next of Miss Millie Brewster. But opposite, through the foggy glass door inscribed "Aristide Jean-Marie Cornelius" a faint blur was showing—a telltale streak of yellow under the door.

"By Jove, it's the baron!" he said to himself. "Wonder if the poor devil is actually hungry. Well, if he is—" He yielded to the good impulse, softly placing three oranges in line, and withdrew on tiptoe.

Back in the studio, he took the letter from his lips, scanned it curiously, and then inserted it in the stocking which was King O'Leary's by right of a desperate scrawl. He approached the two sleepers, drew a blanket over each, and stood a moment studying the new friend who had dropped in on their existence as though he had fallen like the rain-drip through the skylight, drawing his own conclusions, neither judge nor sinner but wise young philosopher. Then he put out all lights and went gratefully to bed.

IV

THE oldest inhabitant of the sixth floor, so ancient that he was already installed when the present Mr. Teagan had inherited the Arcade from his uncle, was a Frenchman, Mr. Cornelius, who lived in the corner room on the court overlooking the square, which had the one economy which, to his mind, compensated for the thunder of the elevated, the grind of the traffic, and the shrill of the newsboys which rolled through it—a providential outer arc-light, sputtering and furnace-white, which lit his room, once the curtains were drawn, and saved the expense of lighting. There was a tradition that he had at one time occupied the large studio at the farther end and had successively progressed down the hall to his present quarters. Mr. Cornelius was in the sixties, of slight build, erect, and springy on his little feet, mustache and imperial, worn in the manner of the Emperor Napoleon III, snow-white against the dusky Spanish tan of his complexion. His features were delicate and finely chiseled, especially the nose, and one eyebrow was noticeably lifted, which gave him an alert expression. He lived in seclusion, opening his door but to one person—Miss Pansy Hartmann, who had won his confidence and posed for

the dilettante sketches it amused him to make, while she read mechanically to him from yellowed books of which she understood not a word. For days he never left his room, occasionally appearing in a faded peacock-blue dressing-gown. Each Sunday, however, he donned a Prince Albert coat of forgotten lines, scrupulously clean though shiny and mended, put on a black stock, and brought out from some treasure-box a top-hat of swirling lines, inclined it slightly over one ear, and, taking gloves and silver-studded cane in hand, walked magnificently to church and back again.

Several things were inexplicable in his habits. On the first days of each month, sometimes for two nights, never for more than three, he donned his gala attire, ordered a taxi from the opposite hotel, and gave orders to the chauffeur to drive to Delmonico's. When he returned, Sassafras always noticed a gardenia in his button-hole. The rest of the month he skimped along, no one knew how except little Pansy.

In the room next to Mr. Cornelius, who was called "the baron," was a tiny old lady, Miss Angelica Quirley, who had nested there for a decade in the company of a shivering, jerky little black-and-tan terrier, Rudolph, (in memory, perhaps, of an unhappy romance) who was known as "the fire-hound," from the uncanny instinct with which he could rouse the Arcade with his yapping at the slightest smoldering. Miss Quirley spent her time dressing dolls for toy shops, mending old favorites, and painting into china cheeks rosebud smiles to gladden the hearts of unknown children. Children would have flocked to her knee, only, unfortunately, there were no children there. And so Miss Quirley went on, longing for some one to listen to but never quite mustering up her courage to approach a friendship.

Next to Miss Quirley was a lawyer, lately arrived, Lorenzo Pinto Drinkwater, a Portuguese Yankee, who had an office on the second floor, and who enveloped all his movements with an instinctive mystery. He had the Yankee body, lank and ribbed, and was so tall that his head seemed always looking over a transom. The face was handsome, in a dark, Gipsy way, and the eyes, despite their shiftiness, had a certain flashy attraction. He dressed loudly, and spoke in a confidential whisper. Several times he had sought to open a conversation with "the baron," who evidently had roused

his ferreting instincts, but Mr. Cornelius, despite his usual courtesy, had openly snubbed him.

Across the passage from the elevator to the hall, next to King O'Leary's room, was the home of Miss Myrtle Popper, manicurist and marcel-waver. She had come from New Hartford, Connecticut, with a yearning for the greater advantages of metropolitan society, tall, clear-eyed, a Junoesque figure, undeniably stunning, with her youth, her vibrant health, her smiling green eyes, and her miraculous coils of ruddy hair. She had thoroughly enjoyed her first winter in New York society, calmly determined to be amused and as equally determined to hold her head high, quite capable of taking care of herself, a democrat by association and a philosopher by a native shrewdness.

Across the hall from Mr. Cornelius was another arrival of the autumn, a Miss Minnie Brewster, from the Middle West, who had come to New York with golden dreams of an operatic career and who paid an unhang'd charlatan the sum of five dollars a half-hour for refusing to tell her the truth about her sweet, toylike voice. She was a pretty country flower, sadly transplanted, a fragile blonde, with an angelic face and starry eyes, destined for simpler things, and quite helpless when confronting the world alone. She was dying of loneliness.

The two models who roomed together in the adjoining studio, Miss Belle Shaler and Miss Pansy Hartmann, were daughters of New York, utterly opposite in temperament and inclination, but fast friends by the bond of a long and united front against the perplexities, and trials, of their existence.

Belle Shaler was a noted character in the art circles in New York, through which she roamed—slangy, cheeky, outswearing a man, flying occasionally into the temper of a fishwife, but with the biggest heart in the world—a female gamin, up out of the slums, always ready to wage battle against injustice or for misfortune, speaking her mind brusquely, a terror to pretense and hypocrites—a jewel of a model, with lithe, slender limbs and delicate curves, despite her sandy hair bobbed short and the upturned urchin's nose, defiant and satirical. She made herself at home wherever she pleased, carrying the gossip of the profession, welcomed everywhere, in the studios of celebrated illustrators on the West Side, in the lofts of sculptors on the top floor of Heaney's, or

rambling through the outer regions of Washington Square and Greenwich Village, always ready for a spree, brimming over with vitality and a cocky summons to the world to amuse her.

Pansy was of opposite type, soft-eyed, soft-spoken and gentle, without Belle's beauty of limb, but like a dark and velvety flower, with her soft, oval, blushing face and Oriental eyes which seemed to crowd her eyelids—all feminine, a virtue by which she had made a deep and disquieting mark on the impressionable heart of Tootles. She knew little of her own life. She had been a model as a child, with blurred memories of older and harsher beings about her who had long since faded away. She had an archness in her smile, and one eyebrow noticeably uplifted, in a manner so strikingly like the baron's that everyone commented on it. Indeed, she might easily have passed for his daughter, nor could he have treated her with more deference. She was very fond of the aristocratic, lonely old man with an impulsive kindness which was deep in her nature.

Between their room and the abode of Art and Literature was the home of Ludovic Schneibel, a dentist by necessity, with offices on the third floor, but with a spiritual yearning toward art, literature, and music, and, in particular, the company of artists. He was a squatly, fiery-headed, and fiery-worded Swiss-American, in the forties, lame in one leg, and given to velvet coats and floating neckties. He executed fearful compositions of Alpine storms over leaden lakes with large rainbows in the background, being, indeed, without any talent but the love of painting, yet selling his canvases to the large department-stores to set off their stock of gilt frames.

Down the hall, at the extreme back, was Miss Inga Sonderson, with whom King O'Leary had spoken on Christmas eve, of whom the Arcade knew as little as they did of Mr. Aristide Jean-Marie Cornelius (if, indeed, that were his true name, which no one believed). Belle Shaler had posed for her several times—she did posters, covers, and decorative sketches—and had a peaceful memory of filmy coverings and hangings, harmonies in gray and green like the brooding sea, neat couches and window-boxes of pungent and bright flowers. She seemed twenty-four or twenty-five—possibly a year or so older—repressed and contemplative. Her body was like a youth's, firm and

supple, and when she moved, the eye went to the hip immediately as a center of grace—of that flowing grace which one sees in the poised female figures on Grecian friezes. Her hair, which was a profound black with the depth in it of a forest pool, had certain blue, furtive gleams which perhaps only an artist would have noticed. She wore it braided and drawn over her forehead in a Swedish coil, rather severe in movement. The face was fragile, unusually dark, with the darkness of the Northlander, and two things were remarkable in it—the eyes, and the upper lip, which was unusually sensitive and the first to quiver with any strong emotion which was elsewhere repressed. The eyes were the blue of cold, open waters, with a mist of gray—like a curtain drawn across her soul, beyond which no one penetrated. She dressed in simple lines and quiet tones, dark blues and greens, with only a broad lace collar and cuffs in neat relief. She appeared haughty; Tootles referred to her as "Lady Verd de Vere." As a matter of fact, she was not haughty at all, and utterly unaristocratic. She was simply self-sufficient. Whatever her antecedents, she spoke English naturally, as though she had been born to it, with a low, rather guttural, but pleasant note, curiously soothing; and yet she might have been a waif from a distant Scandinavia, region of encroaching night and wan, midnight days.

Opposite this room, at the back corner, was the show studio of the Arcade. A genius now passed into society had inhabited it, and the tradition remained. Yet it had had an unlucky history. Those who had held it had not held it long, and the last occupant, a friend of Inga Sonderson's—some had it they were engaged—Champeno, a young sculptor of great promise, had disappeared under a cloud, leaving his furniture in forfeit. For a month it had stood empty, until several days before the opening of this story, when the rumor went around that it had been let to an artist named Dangerfield, and the curiosity of the Arcade was further excited by the appearance of numerous packing-boxes of unusual size, suggesting furniture *de luxe*.

This was the situation on the sixth floor, back among these social stragglers enclosed in narrow prisons of their own choosing, secretly yearning for each other's company, when, on Christmas day, a bubble of for-

tune was destined to break among them like a carnival bomb.

V

THERE was only one thing in life that bothered Tootles greatly, and that was the getting-out of bed in the morning. It was high noon when he finally determined to try the influence of mind over matter according to a method all his own.

"I see myself skipping gracefully over to the wash-basin," he said aloud.

The Mind was attentive, but Matter did not budge. He decided to modify the test.

"I see myself standing proudly on my own feet by the side of my bed." Still no result. "I see one of my legs thrust from the covers," he persisted. Immediately, one lavender pajama-leg emerged. "I see both of my legs out. I see myself raising myself to a sitting position," he continued triumphantly, and, suiting the action to the word, he sat bolt upright. At the same moment, King O'Leary rose to a sitting position. They confronted each other thus drowsily a moment, and then smiled.

"Well, Santa Claus, how are you?" said Tootles, with the superior cruelty of the teetotaler.

King O'Leary made a wry face.

"Was I pretty bad last night?"

"My boy, I thought you were charming!"

"Good Lord, I don't get that way once in a dog's age!" said King O'Leary, rather ashamed.

He rose, shaking himself together, and his glance fell on the three suspended socks, bulging grotesquely.

"Did I do that?" he said, with a wan smile.

"Don't you remember playing Santa Claus up and down the hall?"

"No; but I remember something about riding miles and miles in an elevator."

Flick-Wilder now opened his eyes. He stared at King O'Leary a moment in confusion, and then a light dawned.

"Oh, hello! Well, King, you're the real guy! How are you?"

"Fine!" said King O'Leary.

"Art, you may start the coffee," said Flick, yawning. "What's that—oranges?"

"You don't remember decorating the hall?" said Tootles, lighting the percolator.

"I do," said Flick, whose memory was remarkable. He added sternly: "King, the

infant has stolen our Christmas presents—presents we gave the floor. All our kind intentions are beaten by this son of a thief."

"I may have taken away the presents," said Tootles unfeelingly, "but I was thinking of Christmas breakfast, likewise Christmas lunch and Christmas dinner."

King O'Leary immediately, with an air of great apprehension, dove into his clothes, and displayed a last remaining handful of small coin.

"Shake yourself," said Flick, alarmed.

"Seventy-nine cents," said King O'Leary ruefully.

"We might get three twenty-five-cent lunches at Brannigan's bar," said Tootles. By this, O'Leary understood that he was definitely adopted by virtue of the axiom of what was his was theirs. "Brannigan's a friend of mine. Might stretch it a little if I offered to paint his portrait. What did you give Sassafras?"

"Fifty cents, of course."

"Every time you got into the elevator?"

"By Jove, that's so!"

"Great system of yours, Flick," said Tootles. "Sassafras has got five of it. 'Never mind; there's the stockings. They're full of nuts."

O'Leary went to them and emptied them on the table, perceiving the letter for the first time. He took it up.

"I don't like these things," he said, frowning.

"Neither do I," said Tootles. "They send you a bill nowadays like a billet-doux."

"Kick me!" said O'Leary, all at once. He had opened the letter.

"Perfectly willing to, but why?" said Tootles, approaching.

"Kick me—bite me—stick a pin in me!" said O'Leary wildly. "Listen!"

They gathered around while O'Leary read:

South Washington, Oklahoma.

KING O'LEARY,
DEAR SIR:

By the will of your second cousin, Halloran O'Leary, deceased October last, we are directed to transmit to each of the beneficiaries therein so as to reach them on Christmas day exactly, the sum of one thousand dollars (\$1000), which please find enclosed.

Respectfully yours,
MCDAVITT & COURTNEY,
Attorneys.

"Let me read it," said Flick, while Tootles gazed anxiously at King O'Leary, in

doubt as to the effect on his heart. Then they all sat down and looked at each other.

"Say something," said Flick angrily, at last.

"I feel like praying," said Tootles weakly. "I believe I do believe in Santa Claus."

They examined the letter again, turning it over and over in a sort of stupefaction, without finding a flaw. Even the draft was at sight on a New York bank.

"King," said Flick reverently, "never let me hear you curse Christmas again."

"Never again." He gazed at the check, overwhelmed. "My Lord, how can we ever spend that money!"

The problem was a terrific one.

"Boys, we've brought each other luck," said King O'Leary, with a sudden glow. "Here's my proposition: If you like me as I like you, I'll move my old tune-box in tonight and pay a year's rent."

Flick and Tootles shook his hand with emotion, but protested.

"You're one of us, but nix on that rent idea. I'm firmly against that," said Tootles. "Suppose we went up in smoke?"

"But how the deuce, then, are we to get away with it?" said King O'Leary, frowning. "If I invest it, some one else will get it. By golly, this time I'm going to have a run for my money! We must do the thing up in a big way—one grand splash!"

"And after it's gone," said Tootles, "what good will it do you? No, no; spend it where it will leave memories," he said wisely. "Keep it right around the block."

"Right you are!" said King O'Leary, with conviction, for his faith was of the simplest. And suddenly he exploded, "By golly, son, I'll tell you now how we'll start to crack that check!"

"How?"

"We'll have a Christmas of our own—a tree with presents for everyone, and a Christmas dinner!" His eyes began to snap as he enlarged upon his idea. "Boys, we'll have them in, every lonely mother's son of them—daughters, too! We'll have an orchestra and decorate the studio—By jingo, we'll give the old place the greatest shebang these regions have ever known!"

"King O'Leary," said Tootles rapturously, "tell me the truth—are you Santa Claus?"

An hour later there was deposited at the door of each room along the hall, to the amazement of each occupant, the following

The Woman Gives

card, jointly composed, and decorated with Christmas designs by Tootles.

WHY BE GLUM?
GET TOGETHER AND SWAT THAT GROUCH!
MR. ST. GEORGE KIDDER, MR. FLICK
WILDER, AND MR. KING O'LEARY
INVITE YOU TO A LITTLE CHRISTMAS OF
THEIR OWN.

ONE GLITTERING, GUZZLING GORGE,
including a monster TURKEY and a genuine roast
PIG, prepared absolutely regardless of expense.
CHRISTMAS DINNER AT 7
CHRISTMAS TREE AT 9.
CHRISTMAS DANCE AT 10.

MR. FLICK WILDER will carve the roast pig;
MR. KING O'LEARY will tickle the ivories;
MR. ST. GEORGE KIDDER will amuse.

COME AND ENJOY YOURSELVES!
STAY AWAY AND BE DAMNED!
R. S. V. P.

VI

DURING the afternoon, King O'Leary performed wonders. Heaney's had agreed to hold the check and even to advance a hundred dollars cash in consideration of the magnificent order for the evening. Tootles, who was left in charge of the studio as the Committee on Decorations, beheld, in successive stages of amazement, the arrival of a Christmas tree, followed by two urchins staggering under wreaths with trailing red ribbons and green garlands, an immense clump of mistletoe, which he immediately suspended from the snout of a great green Chinese dragon floating in mid-air; and while he was yet in the throes of apprehension that King O'Leary's thousand dollars had been dissipated, a brigade of waiters arrived, who built up, as though by magic, a table capable of seating a score. On top of this followed two florists (one evidently having proven incapable of filling King O'Leary's desires), who further transformed the studio with potted flowers and palms and left a moist, tissue-filled box redolent with *bouillonnieres*.

By five o'clock, acceptances had come in from every one except Drinkwater and Inga Sonderson—and also Dangerfield, who, however, had presumably not yet moved in. At six, Flick and King O'Leary, returning laden with presents, stopped at the door with exclamations of wonder at the miracle they themselves had wrought.

At seven o'clock the guests arrived: Mr. and Mrs. Teagan, who had been especially

and strategically invited—Mr. Teagan, very dignified and stiff in dinner coat and fat black tie; Mrs. Teagan, rustling good naturally and beaming forth from a gorgeous pink-satin ball gown with black stomacher; Millie Brewster in blue frock cut properly high and loaded with flounce on flounce of ancient lace; the baron in the evening suit which he wore to Delmonico's, with a cut of black-satin ribbon across the frilled shirt; Miss Quirley in a marvelous black-lace gown over a pink-silk foundation, with dainty wristlets; Schneibel in green-velvet smoking-jacket and red tie of a totally different hue from his hair. Belle Shaler and Pansy Hartmann were in evening gowns, popular editions of the latest styles, presented to them by illustrators in search of heroines of high society; while Tootles, who did the honors, moved among them like a dancing master, more English than ever in a snug dinner coat. Flick had dressed for the evening by the simple expedient of adding a *bouilloni*re to his faithful (the expression is his) ruddy chestnut suit, eclipsing King O'Leary, who remained the roving democrat that he was. Finally, Myrtle Popper arrived on a calculated entrance, towering in mauve, loaded with brooches and sparklers, and distilling perfume.

Once gathered, a certain unease unaccountably fell over the party. And King O'Leary, fearing that it was going on the rocks, cried,

"Everyone find his place at the table!"

A moment later, each guest was gazing in wonder, first, at a large portion of caviar ingeniously reposing among clusters of chopped onions, eggs, and lemons, and, second, at the following menu:

FIRST ANNUAL DINNER

MENU

Caviar	Celery	Olives	Salted Almonds
		Turtle Soup	
Oysters on the Half-Shell			
Vermont Turkey with Cranberry Sauce			
Roast Pig with Fried Apples			
Baked Sweet Potatoes Mashed Potatoes Succotash			
Lobster Salad			
Plum Pudding Pistache Ice-cream Angel Cake			
Demi-tasse			

Schneibel and Millie were visibly alarmed at the spectacle of the caviar, while the rest of the party, before the magnitude of the task, seemed struck dumb, perceiving

which, King O'Leary rose and spoke as follows:

"Friends: You have noticed, I suppose, at the head of the menu, that this is the first annual feed. Now, I'm not much on a speech, and this ain't a speech. We're here to get together. Sort of struck me that we had as much right to a Christmas of our own as some one else—this is the answer. If anyone doesn't like anything here, or anything goes wrong—blame me. As for me, I hope you'll like me, as I have made up my mind to like you. And after seeing a lot of this old world, I reckon one of us is just as good as another, and if I brought you together, why—"

Here he stopped suddenly, fidgeted, and sat down amid tremendous applause.

In ten minutes the party was off at top speed, everyone laughing and rattling on in a high voice, utterly regardless of whether anyone was listening or not, as though each had been released from solitary confinement and had to talk for the month of repression endured. The first shyness wore off. They gazed gratefully at King O'Leary and then at each other, wondering why they had kept apart so long, so utterly happy that, at times, several stopped and caught their breath.

And they had just risen joyously, when the door opened and Drinkwater's high face and roving eyes appeared.

"Sorry, most sorry! Didn't get your invitation until just now," he said, sliding in. "Am I too late?"

"Not at all; you're welcome, Drinkwater. This is open house to-night," said King O'Leary, with outstretched hand. "My name's O'Leary. Come on and meet the bunch."

The new arrival cast a momentary chill on the group, a new element difficult to assimilate, while several remarked that he came in as the thirteenth—a coincidence which many later recalled. When the introductions were over, he went directly to the side of Pansy, to the evident and rising annoyance of Tootles.

However, the tree was waiting, and amid the shock of surprise at the unexpected appearance of presents, neatly done up and addressed to each, they momentarily forgot the unwelcome element. In default of the usual bazaars, O'Leary had returned with the spoils of half a dozen pawn-shops. There was an old black-lace fan with carved

ivory sticks for Miss Quirley, which so exactly matched her gown that she sat down and cried, quietly confessing, in a burst of confidence, that it replaced one she had been forced to sell a dozen years before. There were brooches and bracelets for the other ladies, not imitations but real silver and gold with genuine stones—which left them enraptured and stupefied. The baron, Drinkwater, and Schneibel were presented with stickpins, while Tootles and Flick were themselves amazed to receive each a real gold watch. To escape the torrent of thanks, King O'Leary, blushing and happy, bolted to the piano; the colored orchestra, which had just arrived, struck up, and in a moment the whole company was whirling around the studio, from which the tables had disappeared.

In the midst of the second dance, Madame Probasco, the medium directly below, rushed up in stormy protest, followed by a Mr. Dean, a pale young man who was studying to be a veterinary surgeon. Madame Probasco was a fat, rolly lady, dressed in Gipsy shawls and glittering earrings, and she looked more like a wild spirit herself than one who was supposed to tame them and call them forth. At the sight of Mrs. Teagan revolving in the arms of Flick, her anger vanished in open-mouthed amazement, and before she could recover, King O'Leary had her about the waist and spinning among the others, while the pale young man who had been craning over her shoulder fled bashfully.

Sassafras now came in for an exhibition of double shuffling and a visit to the punch-bowl. Mr. and Mrs. Teagan, already in uproarious spirits, followed with an Irish jig, whereupon Schneibel volunteered to give an exhibition of yodeling.

By this time, several facts were apparent to all: first, that Myrtle Popper and Minnie Brewster had eyes only for King O'Leary, and second, that the introduction of Drinkwater into the group was destined to have disagreeable consequences. Tootles, who was good humor itself, was in a thundering rage at the lawyer's continued attentions to Pansy, who—strange to say, seemed rather to relish them.

"Damn him! Why doesn't he keep his eyes quiet?" he said to Belle Shaler, who was trying to pacify him. "What's he trying to discover around here, anyhow?



DRAWN BY HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY

In one corner was a four-poster bed, and on it the sprawling figure of Danger-O'Leary waited. "Well?" he said. "D. T. &



field. She went to it straight and silent, felt the pulse, lifted the eyelids, while King isn't it?" "Only a part of it—I think," she said

He'd better be careful what he does. Why—the cheeky blackguard!"

This exclamation was drawn from him by the sight of Drinkwater, who had maneuvered Pansy under the mistletoe (which everyone seemed to have neglected up to the present), availing himself of this undeniable privilege. Tootles started forward angrily, but King O'Leary, who had noticed his fury, saved the day by catching Miss Quirley in the same predicament amid shrieks of laughter. Tootles, in the general scramble that now took place, was forced to relinquish his grievance, while King O'Leary caught Drinkwater's arm not too gently and swung him around.

"Look out—you hurt!" said the latter, with an exclamation of pain.

"Sorry," said King O'Leary, squeezing the harder, "but a word to you: Go easy—you're trespassing—do you get me?"

To any other, Drinkwater might have returned an impudent answer—one indeed was on his lips; but he looked a second time at King O'Leary's eyes, scowled, and turned away. Mr. Cornelius, who had witnessed the episode, came to King O'Leary and offered his hand with dignity.

"Thanks, Meester O'Leary. If you had not do it, I should have. The man is *canaille!*"

To the surprise of everyone, Flick volunteered to sing a comic song, at the conclusion of which it was voted, on Tootles' motion, that it was the sentiment of the assemblage that he should never be permitted a second transgression. Millie Brewster, to offset Flick's offending, was prevailed upon to sing, and chose to render "The Lass o' Bonnie Dundee," which she sang in such a sweet if slight voice that a sudden gloom fell about the room, as though through the fragile illusion of jollity they had so courageously built up, the hard, lonely facts of their lives had suddenly struck in. Mr. Cornelius was tugging at his mustache; Tootles was staring glumly ahead, while through the heavy silence could be heard the sniffle of Miss Quirley and the throaty sob of Madame Probasco, who had become more and more human.

"I, too, will sing you a sentimental ballad," said Schneibel, his red-bobbed head glowing with redder enthusiasm.

"No, you won't," said King O'Leary resolutely. "I know the kind of stuff you love—moonbeams and grave-stones! Noth-

ing but yodeling for you, old friend Schneibel! Here, we've got to break this up! Everyone on the floor, and all tune up. Who knows 'We'll all go down to Casey's'? —Good! Come on now; knock the blues higher than a kite. One—two—three!"

They were chanting the memory-haunting snatch for the third time, clapping hands in rhythm and struggling amid laughter to get their breaths, when the door was flung violently open and Dangerfield appeared, top-hat, fur coat, and the gleam of a white tie.

The chorus died down immediately. Everyone was struck by the strangeness of his entrance. He looked bigger and rougher than he was, muffled up in the greatcoat, over which could be seen the white of two other faces peering curiously in. He took off his hat slowly, as he saw the company, but in a dazed way, and stood there blinking at them, for all the world like a great bear wandering into the glare of a camp-fire. There was, indeed, something restless and shaggy about him that struck them all as he stood there, staring into the room. The head was full and round with an abundance of curly black hair, grizzled at the temples, with one white lock that rose from the forehead like a white flame. The face was wide-spaced and rather flat, the yellow-green eyes were deep-set with distended pupils, very animal-like—eyes that glowed and set in sudden fixed stares.

Evidently the party had startled him—perhaps it was the presence of women, which he had not foreseen, for, after a moment, he seemed to recover himself with an effort, and said a few words which caused his companions to scuttle away, and took a step into the room.

"I am afraid I owe you an apology," he said quietly. "My friends mistook this for my studio. I hope you will forgive the rudeness of my intrusion."

During the moments which had followed the flying-open of the door, the entire company had remained hushed under the spell of the brusque incident. Everyone had the same feeling—there was something indefinitely wrong with the man, though what it was each would have been hard put to it to express. He had bowed and started to withdraw, before King O'Leary came to.

"Hold up, friend—you must be Dangerfield, aren't you?"

"Dangerfield?" said the new arrival, stopping. "Yes, that's my name."

"Then you've fallen in right. There's an invitation waiting for you in your room for this same shebang."

"An invitation?" said Dangerfield slowly, and he passed his hand over his brow, which was splendid and open. Many noticed the effort which he seemed to put into his words. "I was out, probably. If I had been here, I assure you. I would have come with the greatest of pleasure."

"Never too late, neighbor. This is a get-together party. Drop your duds and join us."

"May I? Thank you," he said, but he continued to stand there without a move to shed his overcoat, until Flick, who had been watching him narrowly, approached, saying:

"Let me give you a hand. Wilder's my name. Glad to know you."

He seemed to recall himself, and slipped from the heavy coat.

A curious thing among the many curious things of this night was that immediately all the others came up to be introduced. Dangerfield shook each hand cordially, with a smile that seemed to transform his whole expression into one of democracy and kindness, giving to his greeting of each woman present a touch of exquisite deference.

Then a strange thing happened.

"Mr. Cornelius," said King O'Leary. "There's a string of names I wouldn't dare tackle. We call him 'the baron.'"

"Mr. Cornelius, I am very—" said Dangerfield, and then raised his head and stopped short. The baron, too, was staring at him as though he had seen a vision of the past, mumbling over and over, "Meester Dangerfeel—Dangerfeel—"

It was only a moment, but everyone perceived it, while Drinkwater's face was fairly quivering with interest. Each caught himself up and bowed, but for a moment across the face of Dangerfield had come again that sudden, startled, bear-like stare which seemed the frightened uprising of another nature struggling within him.

What happened after that came so suddenly that few could remember it clearly. All of a sudden there was a warning shout from Tootles, a scream from Pansy, and the

next moment Dangerfield had reeled and fallen with a crash to the floor.

There was a babble of cries—and in the midst of the turmoil, without anyone knowing how she had gotten there, or, indeed, noticing anything strange in her appearance, Inga Sonderson was seen kneeling at the side of the fallen man, examining him quietly and in a business-like manner.

"He must be carried into his own room," she said, after a quick scrutiny. "When he comes to, there must be quiet—absolute quiet. He must be gotten there now." Her eyes fell on King O'Leary. "You're strong—can you carry him?"

For all answer he stooped and lifted the senseless body, but not without an effort, for the man was powerfully built. Everyone seemed at once to turn to Inga, as though recognizing a providential authority.

"His studio is ready," she said quietly. She nodded to O'Leary. "Carry him in now. The rest stay here." She glanced around. "I think the party had better end. There must be quiet. Belle, I shall want cold cloths; and, Mr. Teagan, you had better send for a doctor. Baker is over on Sixty-seventh Street. Better telephone."

Leaving the crowd, flustered and frightened, to disperse into whispering groups, she went down the hall to the corner studio, which was piled with packing-cases in an indescribable confusion. In one corner was a four-poster bed, and on it the sprawling figure of Dangerfield. She went to it straight and silent, felt the pulse, lifted the eyelids, while King O'Leary waited.

"Well," he said. "D. T.'s, isn't it?"

"Only a part of it—I think," she said, looking at the powerful figure that appeared more like a stricken animal than ever. The curious thing is that it never occurred to King O'Leary to ask what she intended to do. He seemed to accept her as a fact, just as naturally as she had assumed control. She sat a moment, silent, her finger on her lips, and then drew herself together with a sort of shudder, looked at King O'Leary, who was watching her, and said:

"Undress him and get him into bed. Then call me."



DRAWN BY WORTH BREHM

Mr. Passloc uttered dismal sounds, and having dropped his pen, massaged his hair with both hands
(Penrod's Little Cousin)

Penrod's Little Cousin

We don't suppose that many *Cosmopolitan* readers would care to own *Ronald Passloe* for a relative, yet no doubt there are some who have had his double thrust upon them by unkind fate. In such quarters, Penrod will have sincere sympathizers, and even those who are without the understanding born of actual experience will feel that his sensational breach of the etiquette of hospitality was not without some justification. But, after all, who was to blame for Ronald's temperamental defects?

By Booth Tarkington

Author of "Penrod," "The Turmoil," "Monsieur Beaucaire," etc.

Illustrated by Worth Brehm

"PAPA, please," said little Ronald Passloe. "Please, please, please! Won'tcha, papa, please? Please! Oh, please, papa!"

"No; I will not," said Mr. Passloe.

Penrod was an observer in the background. His person immobile and his expression nothing whatever, he was nevertheless warmly interested in the dialogue between the two visitors. Mr. Passloe, a widower, was Penrod's father's cousin, and he and his almost-ten-year-old son Ronald were spending a week with the Schofields. This morning, the second after the arrival, Ronald and Penrod had observed a desirable object displayed for sale in a druggist's window, and they longed for it—Penrod hopelessly, but Ronald with confidence. He could get the necessary sum "out o' papa," he said. "Easy!" he added. Returning, they had found Mr. Passloe alone in the library, writing a letter, and Penrod was watching the beginning of a process, never, in his own case, followed by pleasant results. But little Ronald kept at it.

"Papa," he resumed quietly, "it's only twenty-five cents. That's all we need."

"I don't care if it is," his father coldly returned. "Go out and play some more with Penrod. I'm busy writing. Don't bother me."

"But, papa——"

"Go out and play, I tell you."

"But, papa, how can we play when you won't give us anything we want to play with?"

"I don't care what you play with," said

Mr. Passloe crossly. "I want to finish this letter. Go and play."

Ronald's tone became weary, but retained its affectation of patient reasonableness.

"Papa, I've explained to you time and again—how can we play when we haven't got anything we like? And if you'd only just give me a quarter this once, I promise I'll never ask you for——"

"I won't do it. Didn't you hear me say I wouldn't?"

"Yes. But, papa——"

"That's all there is to it! When I say a thing I mean it, and you might just as well not waste any more of my time. I've said I wouldn't, and I won't."

Ronald became more plaintive.

"Papa, you don't understand! It's just a little squirt-gun that Penrod and I——"

"I don't allow you to play with any kind of a gun, and you know it."

"It isn't a gun, papa. It just makes a little water come out of the end of it. It wouldn't hurt a flea. It's kind of useful, more than just to play with, papa. Honest it is! If you were out walking or anything, and had to have a drink of water, why if you had this little gun with you, why you could get a good drink out of it and be all right again. 'N' then, s'pose you were goin' along somewhere, and kind of looked around somewhere, and s'pose there was a house on fire somewhere, where some poor people lived, and they were all burning up or sumpthin', why, if I had my good little water-gun with me, I'd turn it on that ole fire——"

Penrod's Little Cousin

"Stop it!" Mr. Passloe commanded bitterly. "If you say one more word about that gun, I'll—"

"Please, papa!"

"Not one single word!"

Ronald's manner and voice suddenly became passionate.

"Papa, I got to get that little gun!" he cried.

"Well, you won't!"

"Papa! Pop-puh!"

"Be quiet!" Mr. Passloe shouted. "Be quiet!"

"Pop-puh!"

"You don't get it! No!"

"Please!"

Mr. Passloe uttered dismal sounds, and having dropped his pen, massaged his hair with both hands.

"If you're not out of this room before I count ten, I'll take you up-stairs myself and put you to bed for the rest of the day! One—two—"

"Pop-puh!"

"Three—four—five—"

"Please! Oh, please let me get that little—oh!—gun." Ronald's voice was now syncopated with sobs. He seemed to suffer horribly. "Oh, papa, you know how I want that little—oh!—gun! You know you do, poppuh! You—oh!—know you do! Please, please, please, please—"

"Eight—nine—ten!" Mr. Passloe finished his counting with a great air of grimness, and Penrod gave Ronald up for lost. (He had long ago abandoned all hope of the squirt-gun.)

"There!" said Mr. Passloe. "I've counted the ten, and you know the consequences, Ronald. I told you what I'd do, and you deliberately—"

"I had to have that little—oh!—gun!" sobbed Ronald. "It wouldn't hurt you to give it to me, either! I'd like to know what—oh!—harm it'd ever do you just to let me get that little gun—oh! If I was your father and I had a boy that wanted a little—oh!—gun—I bet you'd think I was pertly mean if I said—oh!—I wouldn't! The only reason you say you won't do it's because you don't want me to have a good time! You don't want me to! Please, please, please! PLEASE—"

"O Lord!" Then the dumfounded Penrod observed the hand of Mr. Passloe seeking a pocket. "Here! Hush! Be quiet! For heaven's sake go and get your little gun!"

Ronald, with no more words upon the matter, instantly grasped the splendid coin emerging from that pocket, and the two boys departed, leaving the sacked parent murmurous behind closed doors. Briskly they went into the bright air, and lightly sped gateward.

"I told you it'd be easy," said Ronald, in a businesslike tone.

Penrod looked with eager interest upon this type, hitherto unfamiliar to him. He said nothing, but looked at Ronald almost continuously as they walked along; and there was approbation in the gaze.

Ronald made several other allusions to his victory, downright contempt for his late adversary mingling with a little justifiable swagger.

"Why, that was nothin' at all!" he said scornfully. "When I want anything, I get it!"

Meanwhile, that approbation in the eyes of Penrod increased in luster.

However, it was somewhat dimmed by various occurrences after their return in possession of the squirt-gun. This implement proved even more fascinating in actual operation than in anticipation, especially as each of the boys wished to operate it while the other remained a spectator, and neither was willing to remain a spectator for an instant. But, for once, Penrod found himself hopelessly outtalked. Ronald claimed possession on the reasonable ground of ownership; he reminded Penrod severely of certain dogmas of etiquette concerning the treatment of visitors, citing many instances to establish his rights as a guest, and finally became so vociferous, as well as verbose, in a reminiscence covering the whole history of their relations to the squirt-gun, that Penrod despairingly proposed a compromise somewhat to his own disadvantage.

"Well, what if it was your own father's money?" he said. "What if you did see our good ole gun first in the window? I was the one said I wished it was ours first, wasn't I? And you got to use water in a bucket out of my own father's hydrant, don't you? Whose bucket is it, I'd like to know? I guess that bucket belongs to my own father, doesn't it? I guess this is my own father's yard, isn't it? Well, I got jus' much right to use that gun any way I want to as you have—and better, too! I guess you got sense enough to see that,

haven't you? Well, I tell you the way we'll fix it. Each of us'll take turns ten minutes long, and you can have the first turn. The one that's not got the gun can stand in the kitchen doorway where they can see the clock, and then, when the ten minutes is up, I can come and get the gun, and *my* turn'll begin."

Having thus spoken, he abandoned the hand-grip, which, until then, he had maintained upon the squirt-gun as a sort of legal protest, and, turning his back upon Ronald, sought the doorway, where he came to a stand with his eyes conscientiously upon the face of the clock.

Ronald capered over the yard, squirting fluently.

"Look, Penrod!" he shouted. "Watch me, Penrod! I got her workin' great now. Watch, Penrod! I'm ole hose-reel Number Nine. Clang! Clang! Clang! Fire! Fire! Fire! *Git* that harness on them horses there, you men, you! Hurry up, now!

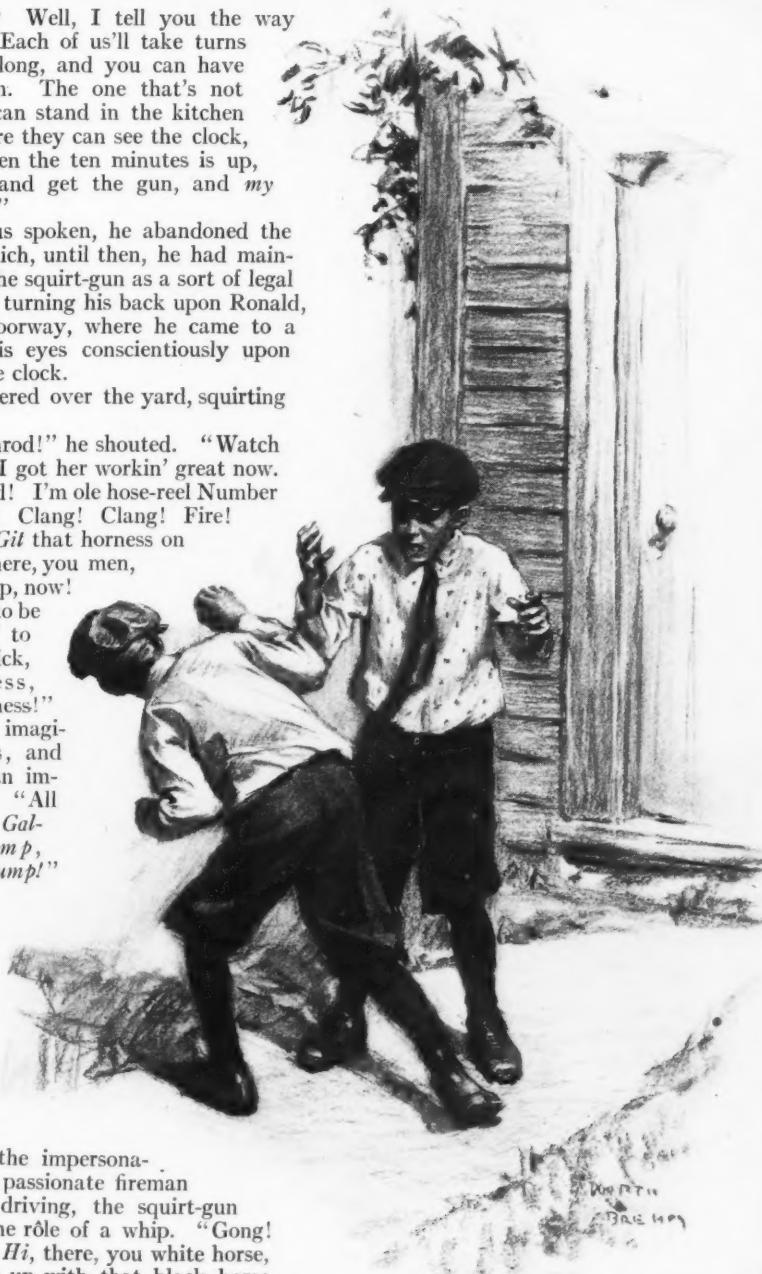
Think I want to be all day gettin' to that fire? Click, click — harness, harness, harness!"

He fastened imaginary buckles, and mounted to an imaginary seat. "All ready, boys! *Gallump, gallump, gallumpety-glump!*"

Here, he not only gave this vocal imitation of a gallop but galloped simultaneously with his legs, contriving with his arms

and shoulders the impersonation of a most passionate fireman in the act of driving, the squirt-gun now enacting the rôle of a whip. "Gong! Gong! Gong! *Hi*, there, you white horse, can't you keep up with that black horse o' mine! Go, you devils, go!

Gallump! Gallump! Gallumpety-glump! *Whoa* there, you



RONALD, WITH A MOTION AS RAPID AS A PRESTIDIGITATOR'S,
SNATCHED THE APPLE FROM PENROD'S HAND

Penrod's Little Cousin

ole black horse, you! Here's the fire! Gimme that hose; I'll show you how *I* put fires out! *Fz-z-z-z!* That's the ole fire blazin' away. Look, Penrod! Watch me! *Listen*, Penrod! *Fz-z-z-z!* That's the fire, Penrod! Why don't you look? Look at the way I put houses out when they're on fire? *Fz-z-z-z!* Squirt! Squirt! Squirt! Pen-rod! What's the matter o'you? Whyn't you look see the way I'm puttin' this fire out? Looky here! *Fz-z-z-z-*"

At last Penrod looked. He had kept his eyes steadfastly, even sternly, upon the clock throughout the interminable period.

"My turn!" And with an altered face, joy upon it, he ran and captured the squirt-gun from Ronald's clinging hands. "My turn now, Ronald! You go stand where you can see the clock!"

"I won't!" Ronald declared vehemently. "You gimme that little gun!"

"But it's my turn. We said we'd each keep it ten minutes for you and then ten minutes for me."

"I did not! You said so. I never said any thing about it at all. You gimme my little gun! I—"

"I won't do it," said Penrod stoutly. "Not till you go look at the clock ten minutes. I looked at it ten minutes, didn't I?"

"You gimme my little gun!" Ronald insisted, growing visibly and audibly more intense. "It's *my* little gun, I guess! And whose quarter paid for it? You just answer me that, I'd like to ask!"

"I don't care who!" Penrod returned lightly. "Look, Ronald: I'm chief o' the Fire Department. This is the way I do!" And he began to romp over the grass with the replenished squirt-gun. "Watch, Ronald! Here's me!"

But Ronald showed even less interest in Penrod's performance than Penrod had shown in Ronald's, and, while Penrod—ever inspired to excel—now brought forth from his creative soul and painted upon the empty air not one mere hose-reel alone but the complex machineries of a completely equipped metropolitan Fire Department, including motor-driven ladder-trucks, chemical engines, and something he called a "fire-tower," Ronald brooded near by with obvious malevolence.

He was not wholly unwatchful, however, as he proceeded to prove, about four minutes after the beginning of Penrod's

"turn." The new fireman happened to be holding the squirt-gun somewhat loosely in his left hand, gesticulating for the moment with his right, and his back was toward Ronald. Ronald darted upon him, captured the squirt-gun with one swift and stealthy jerk, then sped away, laughing tauntingly.

"You give that back here!" Penrod cried, pursuing. "It ain't half a minute since my turn began! You never went near the clock! If I catch you, I'll——"

But Ronald was fleet. He disappeared round a corner of the house, and Penrod beheld the squirt-gun no more that day. Ronald scrambled through an open window before his pursuer turned the corner, and, half an hour later, leaving the squirt-gun securely hidden within the house, the visitor again sought the back yard, discovering his host gloomily beginning the mastication of an apple.

"Biters!" Ronald immediately vociferated. "Biters! I got you, Penrod! Biters!"

"Yes, you will!" Penrod returned sardonically. "You got no more chance to get biters on this apple than—" But here he was forced to interrupt himself by a cry of sincere emotion. Ronald swooped upon him, this time in a frontal attack, and with a motion as rapid as a prestidigitator's, snatched the apple from Penrod's hand. Again Ronald disappeared, cackling, round the corner of the house, safely in advance.

"All right for you!" Penrod called bitterly after him, abandoning the chase. "Go on; keep it! What I care! I know where's sumfing better'n any ole apple, and just because you haf to go and act a pig, you don't get any what *I'm* goin' to get!"

Never was he less a true prophet. As he emerged from the kitchen, a few minutes later, triumphant in the contemplation of half a dozen cookies, cajoled from Della and intended to be eaten tantalizing in the presence of Ronald, this latter lay in wait behind the outward swinging screen door, and again a surprise attack was successful. Ronald was one of those bright-eyed little boys who are as quick and as sly as cats.

Penrod was so deftly bereft of the six cookies that he remained staring incredulously at the crumby and still feebly gesticulating fingers of his left hand until a hastily massed portion of the ravished delicacies had already passed Ronald's esophagus and epiglottis and established itself as a



DRAWN BY WORTH BARREN

"Well, suh, 'at nice bode uz wuff dime: 'at knife-blade wuff nickel—"at's fifteem—an 'at nice kin'lin'-wood uz wuff two cents easy. 'At's sevumteem. I take sevumteem cents fer 'iss here turkle"

through tourist for the whole route of his alimentary canal. The dazed eyes of Penrod lifted from his vacant hand and perceived the undulations of Ronald's slender throat as this journey was thus begun. Then Penrod made outcry, and tried to retrieve what might be retrievable.

But Ronald had discovered that he was easily the fleeter. Distraining to seek cover, this time, he dodged, ducked, and zig-zagged, eating spasmodically the while, and not failing to describe in rich words the ecstasies produced in his insides by the food, which he maddeningly affected to believe Penrod had generously presented to him.

He ate the cakes to the last infuriating crumb, dancing just beyond arm's length, while Penrod formed a plan of retaliation, deciding that he would obtain a fresh supply from Della, and, behind a closed window, eat cookies at Ronald. He went to the length of rehearsing mentally the scornful gestures to accompany this performance, which might have proven an effective one if Della had been a woman with a real heart in her bosom. Unfortunately, she was of those whom no pathos moves except their own, and for to-day she had founded herself stonily upon the senseless and arbitrary dogma, "Six is enough," her only variation being quite as discouraging—"Well, anyway, ye'll git no more!"

Following this chilling siege, Penrod spent half an hour satisfying himself that when Della really intended to hide a pan of cookies she was able to do it. After this, he returned to the yard gloomily, but with his hurt somewhat healed by time.

New injuries awaited him at the hands of Ronald. The latter found it amusing to snatch things from his cousin, and Penrod could not pick up a stick or twig or even a pebble to throw, but Ronald made his attempt upon it, and always (unless Penrod was alertly upon his guard) successfully. By sunset, Penrod had begun to wear a badgered look.

He was silent, not to say heavy, at the evening meal; there was upon his youthful front something not unsuggestive of the careworn expression of Mr. Passloe, Ronald's father. And when Mrs. Schofield, with a mother's absent smile, asked her son if he and Ronald had enjoyed "a happy afternoon, playing together," Penrod's an-

swer was naught. One would have said he did not hear.

Ronald, on the other hand, was talkative. He dominated the table—though Mr. Passloe frequently offered nervous protest—while the Schofield family (except Penrod) listened to the boyish chatter with that indulgent responsiveness which all polite people show to other people's children.

As Ronald talked on, disjointedly interrupting, squeaking, yipping, sometimes almost shouting, Penrod's parents and sister Margaret exhibited every token of friendly and approving interest. They wore the air of people greatly pleased by the conversation of a witty and distinguished person, and yet, all the while, little seemed plainer to Penrod than the fact that Ronald was, definitely, nothing but the freshest little smart Aleck on earth. Penrod became, first, embittered; next, envious and jealous; then he began to ponder, though dimly. Ronald's ways appeared to be successful. It might pay to be like that!

This impression was confirmed during the service of dessert. Ronald announced that he wished to attend a "pitcher-show," that evening, and his father promptly and sharply denied the consequent application for funds. He denied permission as well, concluding decidedly, "You'll be in bed before half-past eight, or I'll know the reason why!"

"But, papa——"

"Not another word, Ronald. You can't go, and we don't wish to hear anything more about it."

"But, papa," Ronald persevered, "it's only ten cents, and Penrod's papa will give him ten cents, and——"

"No, he won't," said Mr. Passloe.

"Well, then," Ronald responded briskly, "*I don't care if I haft to go alone.*"

"No; you can't go——"

"Well, then, you can give us twenty cents and I'll buy a ticket for Penrod, too."

"Didn't you hear me say you couldn't go?"

"Pop-puh!"

"Not another word now!"

"Please, papa!"

"I said——"

"Pop-puh!"

"I told you——"

At this point Ronald became emotional; his young voice quavered piteously.

"Papa, it's *only* twenty cents! I should think you could spare *that* much when you know what a nice time I and Penrod would have! Papa, I *got* to go to that pitcher-show! I *got* to!"

"Shame on you," said his father sternly; "making such a fuss at the table when you're on a visit! Look at Penrod; how nicely he sits and how quiet he keeps."

"Well, that's not so usual," Mr. Schofield felt called upon to say, coming to the rescue of Ronald. "Ronald seems to me a very nice little boy."

"I'm ashamed of him," said Mr. Passloe. "The idea of him making such a distur—"

"Pop-puh!" Ronald interrupted vehemently. "Pop-puh! You *got* to gimme that twenty cents! You *got* to *do* it!"

Here Mrs. Schofield attempted to mediate. She smilingly offered a compromise.

"But, dear," she said sweetly to Ronald, "if your papa doesn't want you to go this evening because it's dark and late—and I'd just a little rather Penrod didn't go, either—think what a nice time you can have to-morrow! When to-morrow comes, and all nice, bright sunshine—"

She continued to expand this theme, offering rewards and enticements—for the morrow. Even in the silent Penrod these evoked no responsive anticipations. A boy can look forward ecstatically to his birthday, to the Fourth of July, to Thanksgiving, and to Christmas. Those are the only morrows that weigh greatly with him, and grown people are seldom less intelligent than when they follow that eternal custom of theirs—offering boys beauteous morrows, invented on the spur of the moment, and easily recognizable as mere dismal words to offset immediate pleasures already within grasp. Ronald was moved by Mrs. Schofield's soft eloquence—moved to break out in a yell.

"Rats!" he vociferated, and set an exclamation point upon the shocking word—a heartrending sob. "Oh! I don't—oh!—want to take any crazy ole drive in a surrey to—oh!—to-morrow!" he wailed. "I want to go to that pitcher-show *tonight!*"

"Ronald," his father warned him sharply, "you're disgustingly rude!"

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Schofield lightly; "Ronald didn't mean to be impolite at all. He's a very good boy—aren't you, Ronald?"

Ronald paid no attention to her, renewing

the attack upon his father with vehemence. But the murky glance of Penrod swept Mrs. Schofield; he gave her a long look wherein strong injury mingled with perplexity.

And why should he not have been injured and perplexed? To a boy, a visitor is a visitor for only the first hour or so; after that you know him as well as you know anybody. Penrod was unable to perceive that his family was being indulgent toward Ronald because the latter was a guest in the house, and if he had perceived this, the point of etiquette involved would have seemed founded upon vicious unreason; he could not understand why a guest should be treated better than "anybody else." But he saw, all too plainly, that Ronald was behaving in a way which would have insured punishment for Penrod Schofield—and here were Penrod's parents making excuses for Ronald and calling him "good" and "nice!" Evidently they liked this sort of thing.

"Pop-puh!" screamed Ronald.

"One—two—three—four—" Mr. Passloe began ominously.

"Pop-puh! Oh, please, please, please, *please!* Papa, you *know* how I want to go to that pitcher-show! It wouldn't hurt *you* to let me go! What *harm* would it do you—unless you don't *want* me to have a nice time! Papa, you *don't* want me to! You *don't!* You *don't!* Oh, pop-puh, *please!* PLEASE!"

His passion had become acute. Mr. Passloe groaned, "O good heavens!" and plunged his hand into his pocket, drawing forth two dimes.

"C'm on, Penrod!" said Ronald briskly.

"Can I, mamma?"

"Well—since Ronald wants to go so much," Mrs. Schofield said affably.

And, as the two boys passed out of the front door, Penrod happened to sneeze, and therefore drew forth his handkerchief, but before he had time to make it of any service to him, Ronald, with a malicious yell, snatched it out of his hand, and ran caroling down the walk and through the gateway—a sprightly soul with never a care in the world.

This snatching-habit of Ronald's, jocular as it was, palled so heavily upon Penrod the next morning, that by an artifice he managed to withdraw from his visitor's company, and, leaving Ronald the whole of the Schofields' yard as a playground, put

Penrod's Little Cousin

several fences between himself and the snatcher, then emerged to the comforting, secluded alley, where he walked, inwardly communing. Ere long he encountered one Herman, colored. Herman was preoccupied with a turtle, an intelligent animal about the size of the palm of the brown hand upon which it rested.

"Yay!" shouted Penrod, his troubles forgotten. "Where'd you get that turtle, Herman?"

"I trade him off'n Cubena Howliss," Herman replied.

"Who's Cubena Howliss?" Penrod asked eagerly.

"Cubena live ovuh on canal bank," said Herman. "She say, 'Look what settin' right in pie-pan on kitchum flo' las' ni ht.' She say she mos' yell her neck off. So she say she don't want him so *much*, but she ain't goin' give no turkle away to nobody. I trade him off'n her."

"What'd you trade?"

"I tuk an give her a good piece o' kin'lin'-wood an' a nice bode I foun' ovuh where's buil'n' a house, an' a nice knife-blade."

Penrod touched the turtle's head, which had protruded from the shell adventurously.

"Yay!" he shouted. "A turtle's mighty

"What I goin' *own* a turkle fer, ef I don' know that much about 'em? What I want go an'han' ovuh 'at stick o' kin'lin'-wood an' at bode an' nice knife-blade to Cubena Howliss fer, if I don' know no mo' 'bout a turkle 'n what you say I do?"

"I didn't say anything, Herman," Penrod said plaintively. "What you goin' to do with him, Herman?"

"I'm go' to cut my 'nitals on his back, an' en I'm go' to put him in a bucket in ow woodshed an' waih fer him to grow. hen he git big, my 'nitals go' to grow same as he do. Be two feet long, some day!"

Penrod's eyes glowed and enlarged. The idea he had just absorbed was more than fascinating; it was compelling.

"Look here, Herman," he said breathlessly: "Has this Cubena Howliss got any more turtles? Where's she live?"

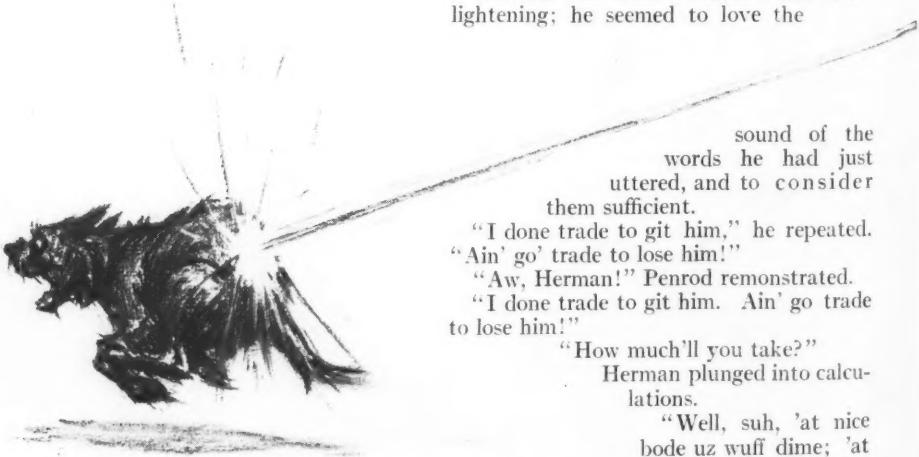
"She ain' got no mo'," said Herman. "Iss here turkle on'y one she own, an' she ain' got air' one lef'."

"My," Penrod exclaimed, "I would like to own that turtle, Herman! What'll you trade for him?"

"Ain' goin' trade fer him. I done trade to git him. Ain' go' trade to lose him."

"Why not?"

Herman was both obdurate and unenlightening; he seemed to love the



smart, Herman. All you got to do is to just to touch 'em on the head or their tail or one o' their feet or anything, and they'll stick 'em right back in again, unless you grab it and hold on so's they can't."

"My goo'ness, you think I don' know that?" Herman demanded, rather vexed.

sound of the words he had just uttered, and to consider them sufficient.

"I done trade to git him," he repeated. "Ain' go' trade to lose him!"

"Aw, Herman!" Penrod remonstrated.

"I done trade to git him. Ain' go trade to lose him!"

"How much'll you take?"

Herman plunged into calculations.

"Well, suh, 'at nice bode uz wuff dime; 'at knife-blade wuff nickel —'at's fifteem—an' 'at nice kin'lin'-wood uz wuff two cents easy. 'At's sevumteam. I take sevumteam cents fer 'iss here turkle."

"I'll buy him," said Penrod eagerly. "I'll give you the seventeen cents for him."

"You got 'at money?" Herman was surprised, perhaps a little skeptical.

"No; but I will have when papa comes home at noon. I can get him to give it to me." He smiled reassuringly—almost swaggeringly, in fact, and added, "Easy!"

"You kin?"

"Yes. And, look here, Herman: Don't you go and cut your 'nitals on this turtle, Herman, because he'll be my turtle soon as I pay you for him, and I don't want anybody else's 'nitals on any turtle of mine except my own 'nitals. You won't cut yours on him, will you?"

"Tell you what I do," said Herman: "I wait till six 'clock, 's even'. 'F you pay me down 'at sevumteem cents 'fo' six 'clock 's even', he ain' go to have nothin' 'tall cut on him. You don' pay me down 'at sevumteem cents 'fo' no six 'clock 's even', I'm go' to begin cuttin'. 'At's all 'a' way I'm willin' to fix it."

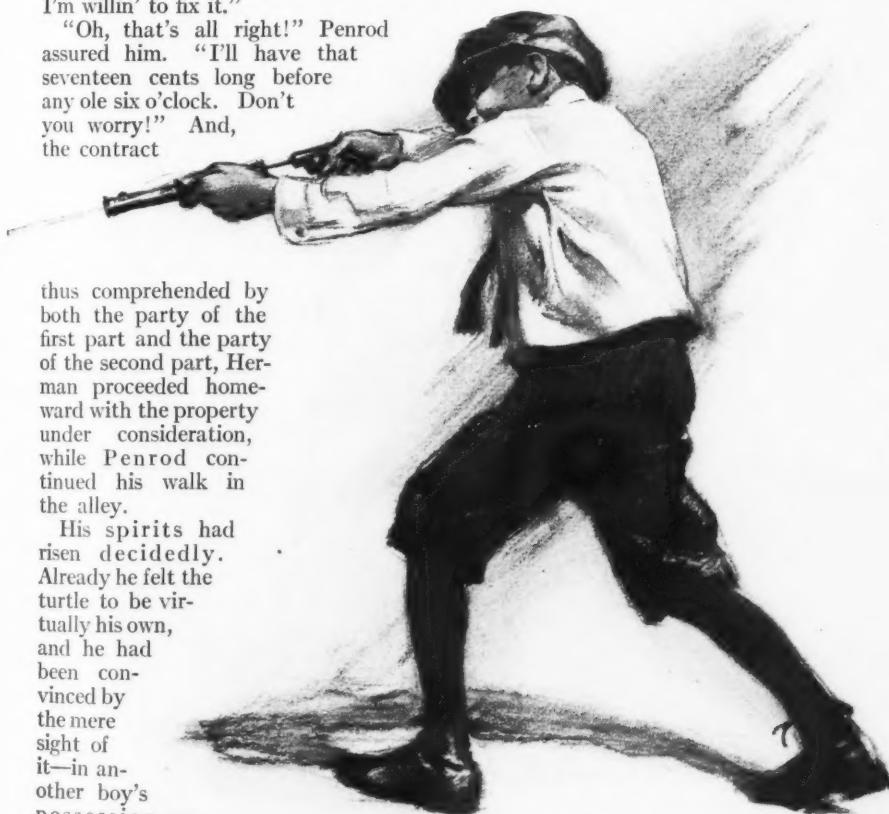
"Oh, that's all right!" Penrod assured him. "I'll have that seventeen cents long before any ole six o'clock. Don't you worry!" And, the contract

why he had never owned one before, and he determined never to be without one again.

His vision roamed the future; he saw the little turtle growing year by year, the initials, P. S., growing with him. He saw the turtle following him about the yard, large, docile, obedient. He would train the turtle to do tricks; the turtle and Duke (Penrod's little old dog) would do tricks together. Penrod resolved not to tell the other boys; he would invite a large crowd—and Marjorie Jones—to a show in the stable. He saw himself as ringmaster coming forward with Duke upon one side of him and the turtle upon the other.

"Lay-deez and gentillmen, permit me to interodoos to your attainshon——"

There was a warmth in his bosom as he



thus comprehended by both the party of the first part and the party of the second part, Herman proceeded homeward with the property under consideration, while Penrod continued his walk in the alley.

His spirits had risen decidedly. Already he felt the turtle to be virtually his own, and he had been convinced by the mere sight of it—in another boy's possession—that a turtle is the most delightful animal in the world. He wondered

Ronald went sweeping over the lawn, in further squirt-gun persecutions of Duke

walked. Already affection for this turtle was springing in the heart of Penrod Schofield.

A little before the hour for lunch, he slid over the back fence, and made his way into the house without being noticed by Ronald, who, squirt-gun in hand, was treacherously approaching Duke in the front yard. Penrod ascended to his father's room and found both his parents there, engaged in conversation.

"Papa," he began, at once, "I'd like you to please give me seventeen cents."

"Would you?" Mr. Schofield returned unenthusiastically.

"Yes, papa, please."

"That's a strange coincidence," said the father. "I've just been wishing some one would give me seventeen thousand dollars, but I don't believe anybody will."

"Papa, please give me seventeen cents."

"No, sir."

"Papa—"

Mrs. Schofield interrupted.

"What do you want seventeen cents for?"

"To buy a turtle," said Penrod.

"A what?" Mr. Schofield demanded.

"That colored boy Herman's got the finest turtle I ever did see," Penrod explained. "He traded some good kindling-wood and a nice board and a nice knife-blade to Cubena Howliss for it, and the board was worth ten cents, and the knife-blade was worth five cents, and the wood was worth two cents, and that makes seventeen cents. He won't take a cent under seventeen cents for the turtle."

Mr. Schofield, a nervous man, had begun to wear a look of considerable irritation.

"He won't?" he inquired dangerously.

"No, sir. I do want that turtle," said Penrod.

"Well, you can't have it. It's time you learned you can't spend money idiotically, no matter how much or how little. You can find all the turtles you want, anyhow."

"I never did find a turtle in my life," Penrod asserted stoutly, "except one time at a picnic, and you made me put it back in the creek." His tone became more insistent. "Papa, *please* give me seventeen cents."

"No."

"Papa, it's the finest turtle I ever——"

"That's enough! You don't *need* a turtle! What on earth do you want a turtle for, anyhow? We don't want a

nasty turtle around the house. You can't——"

"It could sleep in the stable," Penrod urged. "I'd fix a place for it. It wouldn't be any trouble or anything to *you*, papa."

Mr. Schofield raised his voice.

"Didn't I tell you you couldn't have it?"

But now Penrod's tone became almost excruciatingly plaintive.

"Papa, *please* give me seventeen cents! That's all I want you to do. Can't you just give me seventeen cents?"

"No!"

"Pop-puh!"

"No!"

"Pop-puh!"

"Didn't you hear what I said?"

"Papa, please, please, *please*——"

Mr. Schofield sent a sharp glance at his wife, who had begun to look serious beyond her wont.

"What's the matter with him?"

Before Mrs. Schofield could express an opinion, Penrod intervered. He uttered a sudden howl; a passion took possession of him.

"Pop-puh!" he bleated. "I *got* to get that turtle! I *haf* to have seventeen cents! What harm would it do *you* for me to have that turtle? You don't *want* me to have a nice time with that turtle! You *don't*! Oh, papa—oh!—pop-puh—oh!—*please!* Please, please, please, *please*, PLEASE!"

Mr. Schofield rushed upon his son. By the shoulders he caught Penrod, and the latter found it impossible to continue his imitation, one all the more remarkable because it was only partially a conscious imitation. Most of it was instinctive. His father shook him.

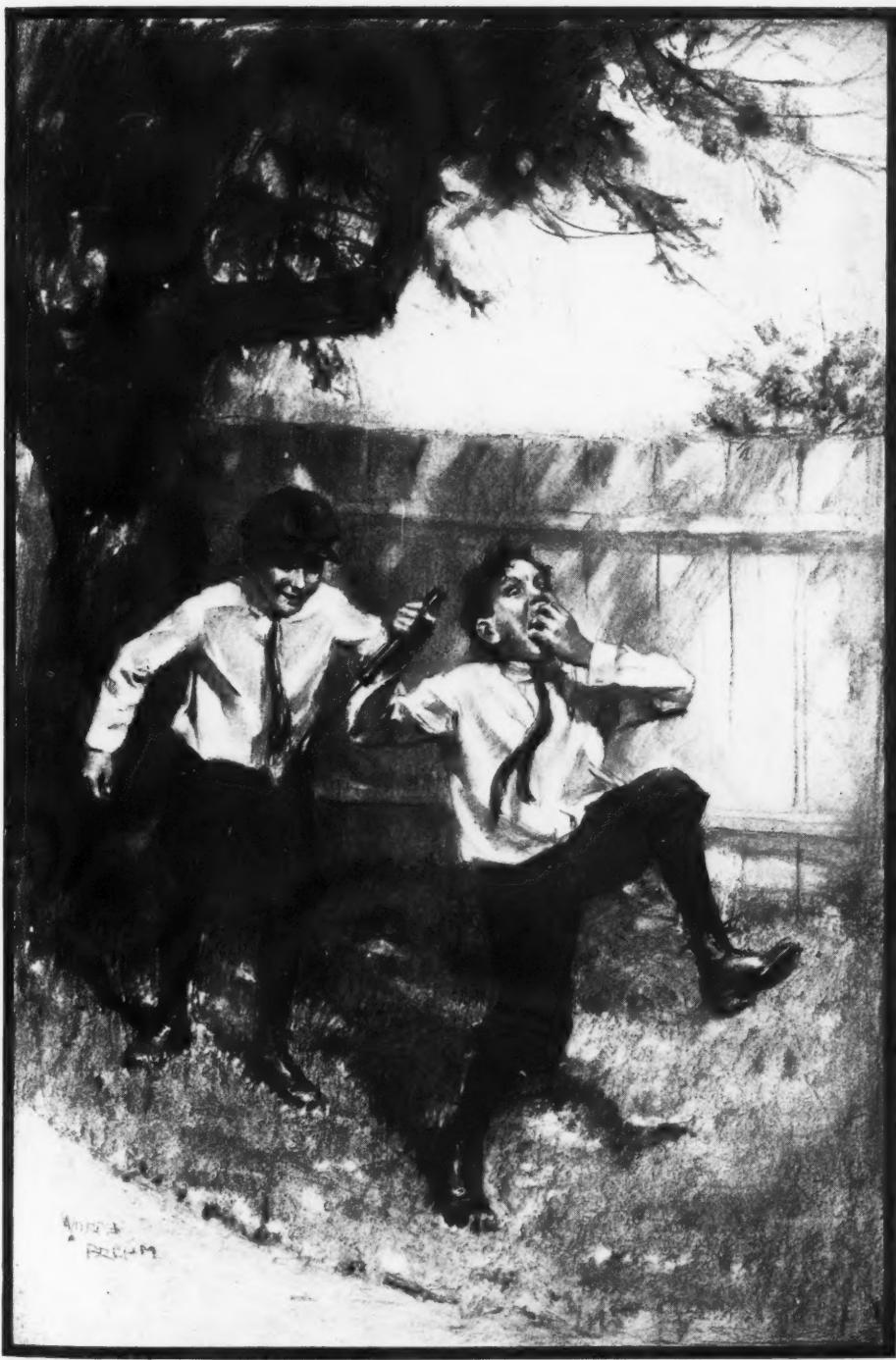
"By George, he's caught it!"

And he impelled the unfortunate Penrod toward a door which Mrs. Schofield sorrowfully opened, in response to a grim command from her husband. It was the door of a drear and dark closet, utterly without resources to aid an inmate in passing the time.

"You stay in there till you get over it!" said Mr. Schofield, as he closed this painful door. Then he turned to his wife.

"By George, we want to cure him of *that*, right at the start! We don't want to be driven as crazy as poor cousin Henry."

Penrod was released by Mrs. Schofield subsequent to his father's departure after lunch. He was allowed to partake of some



BRUMMETT

Ronald attempted to swallow the thing after the forceful manner of an anaconda.
He did not succeed. Instead, he uttered a dreadful cry

Penrod's Little Cousin

chilled remains of the meal, but informed of a decree that he should curtail his activities until four o'clock. He was to stay indoors until that hour. Thereafter, he could go out, but not until the next day outside the yard. And, upon this additional sentence, he spoke not, yet his eyes were fierce and almost unbearable.

He underwent his penalties to the full, enigmatically looking out of windows most of the long, horrid time, his expression merely concentrating a little when across his field of vision Ronald went sweeping over the lawn, in further squirt-gun persecutions of Duke. But at eight seconds after four o'clock, Penrod threw open the rear doors of the stable and gazed earnestly at the abode of Herman across the alley.

"Yay, Herman!" shouted Penrod.

Herman appeared.

"Herman, I can't come out. I got to stay in our yard till to-morrow; but the stable's just the same as the yard. Where's that turtle?"

Herman's air was morbid; injuries lay heavy upon him.

"You kin' keep 'at sevumteen cents," he said. "Hain't no turkle! I laid him down nice in dish-pan. Pappy sen' me to drug sto' git him some 'at brain-medicine; mammy tuck 'at turkle an' frew him in ash-pile. Man come 'long; clean up ash-pile. Tuck an' tuck 'at turkle an' done ca'y him off! I tell mammy 'at's nice way treat sevumteen-cent turkle, a'n' she gone bang me ovuh my haid wif' a dish-towel. Go on keep you' sevumteen cents; I ain' got no turkle!"

Penrod sighed.

"I only wanted to look at him, anyway, Herman. I couldn't get the seventeen cents. I tried"—his face grew wan—"but—but—but I couldn't fix it," he concluded.

"Well, mammy done fix my turkle," remarked the colored boy across the way, withdrawing gloomily.

Penrod sighed again, closed the stable doors, and stood in the melancholy half-darkness of the carriage-house to ponder. Then a pleasant aroma came slenderly upon the air, warm and spicy, arousing some interest in the dejected boy; and he followed it to its source in the kitchen.

"G'wan away!" said Della. "Thim little cakes is f'r dinner, an' if y' pa eats 'em the way he use'y do, th'r 'ain't more'n enough to go round."

"Oh, just one, Della!" Penrod pleaded. The little cakes were fat brown little cakes, not flat cookies. They were beautiful to look upon, beautiful to smell. "Can't I have just *one*?"

"If I give ye wan, will ye eat it an' g'wan away?"

"Honest!"

Della gave him one.

"Well, keep y'r word f'r wanst!" she said.

Penrod lifted the cake toward his mouth, and as he did so, a yelp from Duke was heard outside the kitchen window, followed by the shrill triumphant cry of Ronald. Then, at this sound, reminder of the cause of all his woes, Penrod's hand, holding the cake, paused. A strange look came upon the face of Penrod.

"Well, if y'r goin' to eat it, why don't ye eat it an' g'wan away?" Della inquired.

"Guess I—I'll wait," Penrod muttered hastily, and, with the cake intact, walked quickly out of the kitchen and into the dining-room.

Here, engaged in a delicate semichemical operation, with the sideboard as laboratory, he remained not more than seven busy minutes, and when he issued forth the cake was still apparently intact; certainly he had not taken a bite of it. He went out into the yard and displayed himself before Ronald.

"Hey, Penrod!" cried the small visitor. "Watch me! I've learned how I can get Duke so mad with my little gun he almost bites himself!"

"I don't care anything about your ole gun," said Penrod languidly. "I got sumthing better to think about."

"What you got?"

And then Penrod carelessly displayed the cake; in fact, his carelessness was incredible after the lessons Ronald had taught him. Penrod gazed absently skyward, opened his mouth, and, with thumb and forefinger, delicately lifted the cake toward the orifice.

Ronald's bright eyes emitted a purposeful gleam; he swooped like an arrow; his small hand shot out at Penrod's, and, in a flash, he had the cake and was away, his taunting cackle streaming behind him.

"I'll catch you this time!" shouted Penrod. "I been practising running, and I got you now. I'm goin' to take that cake away from you or break my neck!"

To settle this point and insure the latter alternative, Ronald, even in the act of

ducking under Penrod's clumsily reaching arm, opened his mouth to its capacity, plunged the whole cake therein and with one great masticatory action attempted to swallow the thing after the forceful manner of an anaconda.

He did not succeed. Instead, he uttered a dreadful cry; his eyes protruded, and, after a period of terrible activity, he turned the squirt-gun straight into his mouth and there discharged it. This seeming but to increase his distress, he rushed, bellowing, to the hydrant and ardently applied his mouth thereto.

Showers of water sparkled up into the air, descending with rainbow effects lovely to the gaze of Penrod, and in the midst of this aquatic display, Ronald contorted himself into grotesque shapes of protest, squealing like some wild thing of the woods.

Greater suffering finally convinced him that water was not the remedy for his ailment, and he tried great drafts of air taken between heroic gasps. Then, relieved no more by air than by water, he gesticulated insanely for a time and finally became coherent in one vociferous word.

"Pop-fuh!"

He ran to the house, and the kitchen door slammed behind him, but still, from the interior could be heard his searching appeals to his parent. Penrod stood listening for a few moments, while a better and a nobler expression shed a radiance upon his simple features; it was the look that comes to one who, after great turbulence, finds peace in his own soul. Nevertheless, there slowly penetrated an apprehension that the Authorities might consider that he had gone too far, and he sought seclusion in the hay-loft.

He returned to the house unostentatiously at dusk, softly ascending by the rear stairs to his own room. But his mother had heard him, and she came in. The faded light of a western window revealed a small, meek form, sitting with folded hands.

"Ma'am?" he said gently.

"What on earth did you do to Ronald?"

"Nothing."

"He says you poisoned him. He came in screaming, and he wanted us to send for the doctor, but his papa wouldn't. Then he insisted on being put to bed. What did you *do* to him?"

"I didn't do anything."

"Penrod!" She spoke warningly.

"No'm; I didn't. I had a cake and I just put a spoonful of red pepper and a little tabasco in the middle of it, and—"

"And you gave such a horrible thing as that to—"

"No'm. He came and grabbed it away from me, and ate it up before I could stop him!"

Mrs. Schofield shook her head forebodingly.

"We knew it must have been pepper," she said. "Penrod, I don't know what your father means to do to you."

However, just at this moment, Mr. Passloe and Mr. Schofield passed through the hall.

"I was looking out of the window," Penrod and his mother heard Mr. Passloe say, "and I saw Ronald snatch it out of Penrod's hand. Served him right; he has a disgusting trick of snatching. And anyhow, we'll have one meal in peace; he won't be down to dinner."

"Is he still suffering a little?" asked Mr. Schofield, and no one could have mistaken the cheery hopefulness in his voice for anything else.

"Oh, I think he's convalescent."

There came a smothered laugh from each of these gentlemen; they seemed to be in the best of spirits indeed. And then, as they were heard descending the stairs, Mrs. Schofield turned to Penrod with a last attempt to preserve her severity.

"Penrod, you did a very dangerous thing to let poor little Ronald eat—"

"I didn't 'let' him."

"He's a very nice little boy," she said. "It was a shame!"

But a strange thing happened as she was speaking. Her words and her expression were at complete variance. The befogged Penrod saw this extraordinary contrast plainly, as she opened the door and the light from the hall fell upon her face. He perceived that she could not speak of poor little Ronald's sufferings without smiling.

With considerable relief he saw that he was not to be punished, and he also began to comprehend, though dimly and through a veil of mystification, that there is sometimes a certain amount of hypocrisy in people's treatment of other people's children.

"Mamma, aren't we going to have ice-cream for dinner to-night?" Penrod asked happily.

The Girl Philippa

A Strange Adventure in Love and War



Philippa

takes him back to Saïs in his dog-cart. On the way, the men are fired upon from a touring car, but lead their assailants into a swamp and make their escape.

At Saïs, Halkett gets into telephonic communication with Gray, who is carrying the rest of the plans, and tells Warner that his companion will join him. But he gets word next day that Gray's cap has been picked up on the highway, close to some blood stains. (Gray, riding a motor cycle, had also encountered the touring car.) A letter comes for Halkett. It informs him that Great Britain will enter the general European war which is about to begin.

In Saïs, two Sisters of Charity keep a school for the quarrymen's children. One of them is Sister Eila, a beautiful Irishwoman who has been brought up in France. Warner takes Halkett to the school. Here he discovers a German poster intended to convey information to an invading army. He gets Sister Eila to write a letter to the French authorities about this. Halkett learns that Sisters of Charity are bound only by yearly vows.

That afternoon Warner is surprised by the appearance of Philippa. She has run away from Wildresse and tells the painter that she intends to remain with him. Warner is at a loss to know what to do with her, but decides that, for the time being, he will use her as a model, and he takes her to the inn where he and Halkett are staying. In the evening, another attack is made on Halkett's life by a number of men, but the assailants are finally driven away. War with France is now inevitable, and the Germans are becoming more desperate in their attempts to obtain the secret of the Harkness shell. The next morning, an English-speaking man on a motor-cycle appears and hands Halkett an envelop which he says is from Gray, who is lying wounded at his house. Halkett takes it, and the

SYNOPSIS—On the first day of August, 1914, James Warner, an American painter living in Paris who has a summer art school at Saïs in northeastern France, finds himself burdened with the care of a young girl—the result of an extraordinary adventure that befel him the day before in the neighboring town of Ausone. He met there a British secret-service agent named Halkett, who asked him to take temporary charge of an envelop containing a part of the plans of the Harkness shell, which had been acquired by the British government, and which he and a companion named Gray have recovered from German agents who had stolen them in America. The reason for this request is that Halkett had been, since his arrival in Europe, repeatedly attacked by German agents who are trying to obtain the secret of the shell. Warner, who is of an adventurous spirit, takes the envelop.

The two men visit a café and cabaret kept by one Con Wildresse, who is playing the double rôle of a French and German spy. His cashier is a girl named Philippa, who knows nothing of her origin and has been brought up by Wildresse. Her attractions make her useful to him in his work of espionage, which is a business that she loathes. Warner manages to spend part of the afternoon with her, and finds her frank and ingenuous, and he is satisfied that she is virtuous. Philippa has never met a man who treated her as Warner has, and his manner makes a deep impression on her. Halkett is attacked by German agents in the café, but Warner, who now has the envelop, only

By Robert W. Chambers

Illustrated by Frank Craig

next instant is knocked down by the stranger, who attempts to take both envelops from Halkett, who is now carrying the packet he had entrusted to Warner. But Philippa appears and drives the man away at the point of Halkett's pistol while Halkett, partly stunned, hands her the two envelops and tells her to take them to Sister Eila immediately. The Sister has agreed to take charge of Halkett's documents if anything should happen to him. Philippa rushes out and makes off on the stranger's motor-cycle. But he punctures a tire with a pistol-shot, and Philippa is thrown at the side of the road. Just then, Wildresse and three men in an automobile dash up, seize the girl, and, thrusting her into the car, drive off at top speed. The girl, unnoticed by her captors, drops the two envelops into the road; where Halkett, who has seen the whole thing with Warner, picks them up.

The two men determine that they will rescue Philippa before everything else, and prepare to start for Ausone. Halkett sends for Sister Eila and gives her the two envelops, also a cipher letter. He tells her to give the envelops to whoever will, on receiving the letter, translate a Latin phrase it contains to her, not as written but in a contrary sense, which is possible by a change of punctuation. That is, the phrase as written would read: "Thou shalt go; thou shalt not return; thou shalt die in battle." But the proper person to receive the envelops will read it: "Thou shalt go; thou shalt return; thou shalt not die in battle." Sister Eila undertakes this for the sake of France. Warner and Halkett start for Ausone to find Philippa, and before the Sister can leave the inn, she sees an aeroplane approaching.

THE great, man-made bird of prey, wheeling in spirals now above the river meadow, turned and turned, hanging aloft in the sky like a giant hawk, sweeping in vast circles through the blinding blue, as though searching every clump and tussock in the fields below for some hidden enemy or victim. Louder and louder came the rattling clatter from the sky, nearer swooped the great plane on wide-stretched wings, until, close to the earth, it seemed to shear the very grass blades in the meadow, and the deafening racket of its engines echoed and reechoed, filling the world with outrageous and ear-splitting noise.

Sister Eila had gone to the front door; Magda and Linette stood behind her. And they saw the aeroplane alight in the meadow and a hooded figure, masked in glass and leather, step out, turn its goblin head toward the inn, then start rapidly toward them across the fields.

He was a tall, thin man, and, as he crossed the highroad and came toward them, he lifted the glass-and-leather mask and drew it back above his closely fitting,



Sister Eila

hood. When he saluted Sister Eila's habit he came to a full halt, and his heels clicked together. Then he spoke in French, pleasantly, perfectly.

"Mr. Halkett, if you please, Sister. Is he still residing here?"

"Monsieur Halkett has left."

"Oh, I am sorry! Was not Monsieur Halkett expecting a messenger?"

"Have you a message for Monsieur Halkett?"

The air-man twisted his pointed blond mustache.

"I expected that Monsieur Halkett would have a packet for me. Did he leave none?"

"He left a letter," said Sister Eila.

He bowed ceremoniously.

"Would you be kind enough?"

"Will you not enter?"

"I thank you. If I may be permitted to remain here—" He had kept continually glancing up and down the road while speaking; and it was evident that he preferred to remain where he could watch the highway both ways.

So Sister Eila brought the letter to him, and he bowed again with tight-waisted ceremony, pocketed it, and asked again for the packet.

"Wait, if you please," she said. "The letter was to be read in my presence."

"A thousand pardons! I had not understood—" He drew the sheets of paper from the unsealed envelop, glanced sharply up and down the highroad, then unfolded the letter.

Sister Eila's eyes were fixed on his face, but his features exhibited no emotion whatever. Every few moments he looked up and down the road, then bent his pleasantly expressionless face again over the sheets in his gloved hands.

Presently he looked up with a smile.

"I have read it, and I understand it. Would you be kind enough to give me the packet which Monsieur Halkett writes that he has left for me?"

"Please read first what is written on the envelop of this letter," said Sister Eila very calmly.

He turned over the envelop, read the inscription in Latin, smiled as he read it.

"Rather an ominous message, is it not, Sister?"

"Do you think so?"

He glanced sharply to right and left; then, still smiling, he read aloud:

"Thou shalt go; thou shalt *not* return; thou shalt die in battle."

He turned his head with a jerk and gazed down the road as though suddenly startled. At the same instant Sister Eila snatched the letter from his fingers, sprang inside the house, and slammed the door.

As she bolted it, he threw his weight against it for a moment, then turned and ran for the meadow, where the aeroplane stood.

From a window, Sister Eila saw him climb aboard, saw the machine move, run over the ground like a great beetle, and rise from the grass, pointing upward and eastward as it took wing and soared low over the river.

And down the highway, pell-mell, galloped a dozen gendarmes in a storm of dust and flying pebbles, wheeled in front of the inn, put their superb horses to the ditch and the cattle-gate beyond, and, clearing both, went tearing away across the fields after the rising aeroplane.

Over the river bank they galloped, straight into the water, their big, powerful horses wading, thrashing, swimming across; then they were up the opposite bank and over and away, racing after the ascending aeroplane.

From it was coming a fierce spitting of the engine as the winged thing soared upward toward the blue zone of safety.

The gendarmes drew bridle, now and again, to shoot upward from their saddles, then spurred on across the fields, taking ditches and hedges as they came, until the strange chase was hidden by a distant rise of ground, and the quarry alone remained visible, high winging, still rising, still pointed eastward toward the Rhine.

Then, far away across the hills, a heavier shot set the August air vibrating—another, others following.

Faster and faster cracked the high-angle guns on the barrier forts, strewing the sky with shrapnel; the aeroplane soared and soared, leaving behind it a wake dotted with clots of fleece which hung for a while quite motionless against the intense blue, then slowly dissolved and vanished in mid-air.

From the Ausone Fort the gunners could hear, far to the southeast, the sky-cannon banging away on the barrier forts; and the telescopes on their signal-towers swung toward the sky-line above the foot-hills of the Vosges.

But in the town below the fortressed hill, no echo of the cannonade penetrated. Ausone, except in the neighborhood of the railroad and the office of the *Petit Journal d'Ausone*, lay still and almost deserted in the August sunshine. A few children played under the trees by the bridge; a few women sat knitting along the river quay; one or two old men nodded, half asleep, fishing the deeper pools below the bridge; the market-square remained empty except for a stray dog, tongue lolling, paddling stolidly up the street about his business.

But before the office of the *Petit Journal d'Ausone* a crowd stood, covering the sidewalks and overflowing into the street, quietly watching the bulletin-boards.

There was no excitement apparent, no loud talking, no gesticulation. Voices were calm; tones were low; there was almost no movement in the crowd except when people joined, the throng or silently departed.

On one of the bulletin-boards was nailed the order for general mobilization; on the other, a terse paragraph announced that, on Sunday, August 2d, German soldiers had entered the city of Luxemburg, crossed the grand duchy, and were already skirmishing with Belgian cavalry around Liège and with

French troops before Longwy. In other terms, the Teutonic invasion had begun; German troops were already on French soil; for Longwy is the most northern of the republic's fortifications.

Another paragraph reported that King Albert of Belgium had appealed to England, and that Sir Edward Grey, in the House of Commons, had prepared his country for an immediate ultimatum to Germany.

Still a third paragraph informed the populace of Ausone that the British battle-fleet had mobilized and sailed, and that the empire's land-forces were already preparing to cross the Channel.

And Germany had not yet declared war on either France or Belgium, nor had England declared war on Germany, nor had Austria, as yet, formally declared war on Russia, although Germany had.

But there seemed to be no doubt, no confusion in the minds of the inhabitants of Ausone concerning what was happening, what had already happened, and what fate still concealed behind a veil already growing transparent enough to see through—already lighted by the infernal flashes of German rifle-fire before Longwy.

Everybody in Ausone knew; everybody in France understood. A great stillness settled over the republic, as though the entire land had paused to kneel a moment before the long day of work began.

There was no effervescence, no voice raised, no raucous shout from boulevard orators of the psychological moment, no attitudes, no complaints.

Only, amid the vast silence, as the nation rose serenely from its knees, millions of flashing eyes were turned toward Alsace and Lorraine—eyes dimmed for an instant, then instantly clear again—clear and steady as the sound and logical minds controlling them.

Down at the Gare de Châlons, another crowd had gathered to watch the young men of Ausone depart. They came alone or two by two or in groups—sticks, bundles, suitcases, valises swinging—with serious, unruffled features, intent upon the business of the long, long business-day that was beginning for them at last.

Some were accompanied by parents, some by wives and children, some by sweethearts; many had said good-by at home and were walking to the station with brother or friend, saluting acquaintances *en route*.

But the mobilizing youths were undemonstrative, chary of gesture—shy, serious young fellows, preoccupied with the business on hand, conscious that their term of service had equipped them for it—and in their bearing was that modesty and self-respect which discounts self-consciousness and self-assertion.

For there was no longer any excuse for France to be either noisy or dramatic when she went about her business—no reason for posturing, for epigrams, for attitudes, or for the loud laugh and the louder boast to bolster faith with mutual and riotous reassurance in the face of an unknown business venture, concerning the conduct of which the entire nation was excited, ignorant, and unprepared.

The republic had been both instructed and prepared for the matter of business on hand—and was going quietly about it.

In Ausone itself, there were few signs of war visible; the exodus of the young men, the crowd before the bulletins, and the throng at the station, and perhaps more mounted officers and gendarmes than usual, riding faster than is customary in the peaceful streets of a provincial town.

But on the roads around the fortified hill dominating the rolling green landscape in the heart of which Ausone nestled, cavalry patrols were riding; infantry details tramped through the white dust; military wagons and motor-vans passed under dragoon escort; bridges over the Récollette were guarded by line-soldiers and gendarmes, while sappers and miners and engineers were busy at every bridge, culvert, and railway cut.

Above the fort, slim tentacles of wireless apparatus spread a tracery against the sky, and a signal-tower swam high against the blue. Officers up there were talking business to the barrier forts, and the heliographs along the Vosges brilliantly discussed the new business deal with other forts far to the south and east, relaying reports, rumors, and quotations as far as Paris, where the directors' meeting was being held; and even as far as London, where stockholders and directors were gathered to add up profit and loss, and balance policy against ethics, and reconcile both with necessity.

In London, a king, a prime minister, and a first lord of the admiralty were listening to a sirdar who was laying down the law by

The Girl Philippa

wireless to a president and his premier. In St. Petersburg, an emperor was whispering to a priest.

Meanwhile, the spinning world swung on around its orbit; tides rose and ebbed; the twin sentinels of the skies relieved each other as usual, and a few billion stars waited patiently for eternity.

Ausone, lying in the sun, was waiting, too, amid its still trees and ripening fields. In the summer world around, no hint of impending change disturbed the calm serenity of that August afternoon—no sense of waiting, no prophecy of gathering storms. But in men's hearts reigned the breathless stillness which heralds tempests.

Silently as a kestrel's shadow gliding over the grass, an ominous shade sped over sunny France, darkening the light in millions of smiling eyes, subduing speech, stilling all pulses, cautioning a nation's ardent heart and conjuring its ears to listen and its lips to silence.

And, as France sat silent, listening, hand lightly resting on her hilt, came the far cry from beyond the Vosges—the voice of her lost children.

Now she had risen to her feet, loosening the blade in its scabbard. But she had not yet drawn it; she still stood listening to the distant shots from Longwy in the north, to the noise of the western wind blowing across the Channel; and always she heard, from the east, the lost voices of her best beloved, calling, calling her from beyond the Vosges.

As they approached Ausone, driving full-speed, Warner and Halkett encountered the Saïs omnibus returning, and drew rein.

In it was the "harem," much annoyed because not permitted to sketch in Ausone streets. They had seen nothing of any touring car containing several men and a young girl. That did not interest them. What preoccupied their minds was that they had been sketching in the streets of Ausone, and had been politely requested to desist by several unappreciative policemen. So they had collectively shaken the dust of Ausone from their several and indignant feet, and were now *en route* to Saïs to paint haystacks.

Requesting to know whether they might still be permitted to paint haystacks at Saïs, Warner offered them no encouragement, pointing out that Saïs was in the zone of future military operations.

In the face of such an outrageous condition of affairs, no doubt that Art shrieked as loudly as did Freedom when her popular hero fell. Anyway, her devotees now protested in chorus; but Warner advised them to pack their trunks and go to Paris while the going was good; and the Saïs omnibus rolled away, with the "harem" still volubly denouncing a government which dared to interfere with Haystack Art on any pretext whatever.

As Warner drove forward, Halkett said:

"The chances are that the military will requisition that omnibus before evening. It wouldn't surprise me if they stopped us at the entrance to Ausone and took your horse and cart."

And it happened as he had feared. Red-legged soldiers halted them at the town entrance; a polite but resolute young officer refused to argue the matter, but insisted that they descend, accept an official voucher for the temporary loan of their horse and cart, and continue their journey on foot.

As yet, however, punts, rowboats, and skiffs were not subject to requisition by the authorities. Halkett noticed a skiff tied to the shore near a small house on the river bank; so they climbed a stile, crossed the newly mown hay field, and found an old man fishing from the bank in the rear of the house.

For thirty francs they bought the boat outright. The old man shuffled into the house and returned with the home-made oars; Warner took them; Halkett pushed off and sprang in, and they pulled away up the river, breasting a glassy current over which swallows darted and played and dipped, staring the calm surface with a hundred spreading circles.

Rushes swayed inshore where meadows bordered the Récollette, and dragon-flies with turquoise bodies sailed glittering into the breeze. Trees swept the surface of the water with tender leaves still untarnished by the ripening world of waning summer, and in shady coves the cattle stood to their knees in the crystal flood, staring with moony eyes at the passing skiff.

Presently Warner sent the skiff inshore, and, when it lay floating in the shadow of the trees under the right bank of the stream, he rested on his oars.

"The café garden is just ahead, around that next turn," he said. "If you'll take



DRAWS BY FRANK CHAN

Before the office of the *Petit Journal d'Ausone* a crowd stood, quietly
watching the bulletin-boards

The Girl Philippa

the cars, I'll get out on the bank and look over the situation."

"Don't you want me?"

"I don't know; I'll see what things look like first. Do you mind?"

"I'll wait if you say so. But there's a rough crowd hanging about that café, as you know."

"I know it," said Warner grimly.

"Are you armed?"

"I certainly am, Halkett. But I don't count on any trouble, because Wildresse can't afford to make any. If there's a row in that cabaret at such a time as this, the police will make short work of it. I think I'll have no difficulty in finding my little friend Philippa and in taking her out of that miserable place."

Halkett said:

"Don't forget yourself and beat up Wildresse for what we saw him do to Philippa. You can attend to that later. The idea now is to take the child back to Sais."

"I'll try to remember," said Warner, with a somber glance at his friend. Then he handed him the oars and leaped lightly onto the grassy bank.

XVIII

WARNER entered a paved lane leading up the slope between two high stucco walls. It bore the name, "Impasse d'Alcyon," painted under the rusty bracket of a gas-lamp projecting from the wall. A few chickens and a pig moved aside to let him pass.

The Impasse d'Alcyon emerged upon the market-square of Ausone to the left of the Cabaret de Biribi; and, as Warner came out into the sunny, deserted square, the first thing he caught sight of was a written notice nailed up over the doorway of the cabaret.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

THE town of Ausone is proclaimed to be in a state of siege. Place and town will remain under government of the military authorities, aided by the municipality. Both are within jurisdiction of military headquarters in charge of the sector which includes place, town, and environs of Ausone.

By the order of the MAYOR.

The Cabaret de Biribi will remain closed until further notice. For the convenience of the public, the Café Biribi adjoining will remain open between the hours of seven A. M. and nine P. M. until further notice.

The café, separated from the cabaret by a clipped privet hedge, formed the south-eastern angle of the square.

Under its orange-and-white awning, the tables on the terrace were crowded with people lingering over after-luncheon coffee and cognac—quiet, serious, solid citizens, accustomed to their *déjeuner* at that time and place, and whose habits of long standing had not so far been altered in the sudden and general upheaval in the accustomed order of things.

Waiters came and went as usual; men consulted the files of provincial and Parisian papers; one or two were playing dominoes inside the café.

Warner, pausing at the entrance to the terrace, summoned a waiter.

"The cabaret is closed, then?" he asked.

"Since last night, monsieur."

"By the police?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Why?"

The waiter said respectfully:

"It is usual in time of war to close places of amusement. Besides, music and dancing are in questionable taste at such a time as this."

"Certainly. Where is Monsieur Wildresse?"

"The *patron* is absent."

"Where can I find him?"

The waiter shrugged:

"The *patron* went away this morning. He has not yet returned."

"Are you quite certain?"

"Perhaps *monsieur* had better ask the cashier. Maybe the *patron* has returned."

So Warner entered the café. In the cool, subdued light of the interior, he saw the cashier behind her counter—a fresh-faced, plump, dark-eyed country girl who returned his salute with a smile.

"Monsieur Wildresse?" he inquired.

"May I see him for a moment?"

"The *patron* is absent, *monsieur*."

"When do you expect him to return?"

"We do not know. Sometimes he goes to Paris and remains a week or two."

"Do you suppose he has gone to Paris?"

"We do not know. He never tells us where he is going."

Warner thought hard for a moment, then, "It seems that the cabaret is closed," he said.

"Locked up, *monsieur*."

"I wonder if you could tell me where I might find the cashier of the cabaret—Mademoiselle Philippa?"

The girl shook her head.

"I think she went to Paris."

"When?"

"The other day. We understood that she had gone to Paris."

"No," said Warner; "she did not go to Paris. Has she not returned to Ausone?"

The cashier rapped with her pencil, and a waiter hastened to the desk.

"Pierre, didn't you say something about Mademoiselle Philippa this morning?"

"I said that I thought I saw her. It was somebody who resembled her, no doubt."

Warner wheeled around.

"When?"

"It was before noon, sometime——"

"Where?"

"Monsieur, they were putting up and locking the shutters of the cabaret, and on the top floor somebody inside was lowering the lateen shades and drawing the blue curtains. I thought I saw Mademoiselle Philippa. I thought I saw her face for a moment behind one of the windows in the patron's apartment."

"And what do you think about it now?"

"Ma foi, monsieur, if Mademoiselle Philippa has gone to Paris, I could not have seen her at the window."

"But you saw somebody there?"

"I thought I did."

"Could we go to the cabaret and inquire?"

"It is locked up. No one is there."

"How do you know?"

"They locked and padlocked it from the outside. They even removed the geraniums and the three cats. The place is empty, monsieur. I know, because I helped remove the cats and the potted plants. Everybody and everything were transferred last night to the café. And at noon today the police put seals on the doors."

Warner forced a smile.

"That, of course, settles it. I'm sorry. I wanted to see the *patron* and Mademoiselle Philippa. Another time will do."

He thanked the waiter, lifted his hat to the cashier, turned, and walked over to a table by the opposite wall, where he ordered coffee and cognac and a newspaper, as though he had just lunched.

When his coffee was brought, he opened the paper and leaned back against the padded-leather seat, pretending to read but studying the room and everybody in it.

It was a café typical of almost any half-dead provincial town in France—large,

rather dimly lighted, shabbily furnished with marble-topped tables ranged around the walls and two ancient billiard-tables occupying the center of the room.

In the corner near the door was the cashier's cage and desk; on the same side of the room, in the further corner, a swinging leather door, much battered, gave exit and entrance to the waiters as they went to, or arrived from, kitchen and cellar.

And one thing occurred to him immediately: the same kitchen, and perhaps the same cellar, had supplied both cabaret and café. Therefore, there must still be some passage of communication between the cabaret, which had been locked and sealed by the authorities, and the café, which the police had decreed must remain open for the convenience of the public.

Deeply perturbed by what the waiter had said concerning the glimpse he had caught of somebody resembling Philippa, and made doubly anxious by Halkett's sinister remark in regard to the girl's knowledge of secrets which might send Wildresse before a squad of execution, he studied the gloomy room from behind his newspaper, trying to come to some conclusion.

He did not believe that Wildresse and his companions had dared drive into Ausone by daylight with Philippa in the tonneau, either unconscious or resisting them. If they had brought her to Ausone at all, they must have carried her by boat, landed at the foot of the cabaret garden, and smuggled the child, whether unconscious or resisting, into the house through the rear door giving on the river garden.

If they had brought her to Ausone at all, then, she must be, at that moment, somewhere within the walls of the double building forming the Café and Cabaret de Biribi. Otherwise, the gray touring car had never entered Ausone.

To make certain on that point, he presently paid his reckoning, bowed to the cashier, and went leisurely out into the deserted square.

First of all, he sauntered back to the town entrance, where the red-legged soldiers had taken over his cart and horse. Having been obliged to give particulars concerning himself, the soldiers were perfectly friendly. Inquiry they readily answered; such a touring car as he described had been halted and requisitioned by the guard about two hours before his own horse was stopped

The Girl Philippa

and appropriated. There were only the two people in the car, both men.

"Friends of yours, *monsieur?*" inquired the polite lieutenant in charge.

"Business acquaintances——"

Warner hesitated, then asked for the names of the two men and their addresses. The officer on duty very obligingly looked up the information in his leather-covered book. It appeared that the men were Adolf Meier and Josef Hoffman, commercial travelers, of Paris, and that they had gone for lodging to the Boule d'Argent in Ausone. Warner thanked the boyish officer; the officer was happy to have been of service to an American and an artist.

But when Warner turned back into the town, he went directly to the railroad station instead of the hotel. There he presently discovered and consulted the *chef de gare* and the ticket-agent; and he learned definitely that Monsieur Wildresse, who was perfectly well known to both of them by sight, had not taken any train there.

Travelers who board trains at provincial railway stations cannot escape official observation. Therefore, what the station-master and ticket-agent told him was sufficient for him.

He went slowly back along the river quay, crossed diagonally in front of the deserted cabaret, entered the Impasse d'Alcyon, and traversed it to the river bank, where Halkett sat under the big willow tree, smoking his pipe and letting the row-boat float by the chain which he held in his hands.

"Halkett," he said, "they're in Ausone or near it—I'm convinced of that. Their car came in with only two men in it. The military confiscated it. The men's names are Adolf Meier and Josef Hoffman, and they inscribed themselves as commercial travelers from Paris. Do you know them?"

"Perfectly."

"What are they—spies?"

"They are—clumsy ones."

"By any chance are they any of the gentlemen who have been following you?"

"Exactly. Both have had several shots at me."

"That is interesting. The address they left with the military authorities is the Boule d'Argent. What I have found out is this: The Cabaret de Biribi has been closed and sealed up by the police; the café remains open. A waiter in the café

thought he saw Philippa at the window of her apartment over the cabaret just before noon to-day. But Wildresse, they all say, went away this morning. And they have no idea when to expect him.

"Now, my theory is this: Wildresse and his ruffians, realizing that their own necks are in danger, went to Saïs to see Philippa, either to bully her into silence or persuade her to return to duty. When they saw her by the roadside, they changed their plans and took a chance. I don't believe they saw us. We were on our knees in the grass under the shadow of the hedge. After they caught her, they never looked around. I don't believe any of them noticed us at all. Before the car reached Ausone, they must have stopped in some deserted place, found a boat somewhere, sent the car on ahead to Ausone with only two men in it, and then Wildresse and the other two men must have dragged or carried her across the fields to the river and forced her into the boat. That was the only way they could have ventured to enter Ausone. They must have gone by boat to the garden behind the cabaret, where nobody could see what was going on, and there they probably let themselves into the house by the rear entrance.

"That's my theory, Halkett. I believe Philippa is there. I believe Wildresse is there. And I feel very sure that those two choice scoundrels of his at the Boule d'Argent will join him, wherever he is. So I think we had better tie up our boat and go to the Boule d'Argent and find these fellows, Meier and Hoffman, and never let them out of our sight."

"I think so, too," said Halkett quietly.

He knelt down on the grass, passed the boat-chain around the base of the willow tree, linked and padlocked it, sprang to his feet, and walked quickly after Warner, who had already started to enter the Impasse d'Alcyon.

"You're a little flustered, old chap," he said, as he rejoined Warner in the narrow alley. "Don't walk so fast; we ought not to attract attention."

"I'm horribly nervous," admitted the other, slackening his pace.

"We'll have to keep pretty cool about this affair. It won't do to scare those scoundrels."

"Why?"

"Because if they really have her locked

up in that cabaret, I'm afraid to guess what they might do to her if they thought their own skins were in danger."

"I know it," said Warner hoarsely. "I'm worried sick, I tell you! That fellow Wildresse has the worst face I ever looked at."

"He's a bad lot and he looks it. The military authorities would make short work of him if Philippa should ever hint at what she has found out about his rather complicated business affairs. That's what I am afraid of—that he may take some terrible precaution in order to anticipate any danger from her—"

"What?"

"He is capable of doing anything to prevent her from speaking. Keeping her locked up is the precaution that I dread least. What I'm afraid of is that he may kill her."

Warner turned a bloodless visage to his comrade.

"That's what I'm afraid of, too," he said, steadily enough. "I think we had better notify the police at once."

"It won't do, old chap!"

"Why? On your account?"

"No, no! My papers are safe enough now. But I tell you, Warner, French temper is on a hair-trigger, in spite of all this gravity and silence. The very word 'spy' would be the match to the magazine."

"But what of it?"

"Suppose Wildresse denies his treachery and makes a counter-accusation against Philippa?"

"What! How can he?"

"Suppose he declares that *she* betrayed *him*? Suppose already he has arranged documents to prove it? Suppose he had long ago taken such a precaution against any chance of her denouncing him? He is an old rat, grown gray in the business. He must have been perfectly aware that Philippa is honest—that it even went against her to do the dirty work that her own government required of her. He must have known that if she ever discovered his double treachery, she would at least desert him, perhaps denounce him. No, no, Warner; that crafty old sewer-rat left nothing to chance. If that girl ever has an opportunity and the desire to denounce him, you can be absolutely certain that long ago he had foreseen and prepared himself."

"Do you believe that?"

"I am certain of it."

"Why?"

"What does a young girl know about treachery? How many papers has Philippa ignorantly and innocently signed which might exculpate Wildresse and send *her* before a squad of execution in the first barracks available? That's the way such rats as he protect themselves! No, Warner; it's a filthy business at best, and I admit, sadly enough, that I know more about it than you ever could know. Listen, old chap: It's no good stirring up the police until Philippa is outside French territory. Then, and then only, may we dare to let loose the police on this nest of rats in Ausone."

"Very well," said Warner quietly; "I'll act as you think best, only I'll—" He stopped to regain control of himself. And when he had himself in hand again, "Only—it will be a—a bad mistake if Wildresse—if—if any harm comes to that child."

"Oh, in that event," said Halkett quietly, "we need not scruple to kill him."

Warner said unsteadily, "I shall not hesitate a second," but Halkett suddenly checked him with a touch on his elbow, and drew him back behind the wall of the Impasse d'Alcyon, from which alley they were on the point of emerging into the town.

Two men were crossing the almost empty market-square toward the Café Biribi.

"Hoffman and Meier," whispered Halkett. "There go our promising young rodents straight toward the old rat's nest! It won't do for them to catch sight of me—Wait a moment! There they go—into the Café Biribi! Follow them—they don't know you. Keep your eye on them. I'll stroll over to the quay and dangle my legs on the river wall. If you need me, come out on the café terrace and beckon."

"Would it do to hand over that pair to the police? They are German spies, are they not?"

"They are. But at present they are likely to be useful. If Wildresse is in the café or the cabaret, they are sure to reveal the fact to us. Better go in and keep your eye on them. If you want me, I shall be smoking my pipe on the river wall across the street."

He nodded and strolled over toward the little tree-shaded quay, filling his pipe as he sauntered along. Warner continued on to the café, entered, seated himself against the shabby wall, picked up an illustrated journal, ordered bitters, and composed himself



DRAWN BY FRANK CRAIG

They found an old man fishing from



the bank in the rear of the house

The Girl Philippa

to enjoy the preprandial hour sacred to all Frenchmen.

Without looking, he was aware that the two men, Meier and Hoffman, seated at a table near the cashier's desk, had noted his arrival and were steadily inspecting him. But he did not look in their direction; he turned the pages of the illustrated paper, leisurely, until the waiter brought his Amer Picon and a chilled *carafe*. Then he measured out his water with the unstudied deliberation of an habitué, stirred the brown liquid, sipped it, and, turning to another page of his paper, let his eyes rest absently on the two men opposite.

By that time, neither of them was even looking at him. They were drinking beer; their heads were close together, and they had turned so that they were facing each other on the padded-leather wall settee.

It was impossible to hear what they were saying; they spoke rapidly and in low tones.

Guarded but vigorous gesticulations marked the progress of their conference; now and then both became mute while the waiter replenished their glasses with beer and added another little saucer to the growing pile on the marble table.

For an hour, Warner dawdled over the café papers and his glass of bitters. The men opposite still faced each other on the leather settee, still conversed with repressed animation, still guzzled beer. Once or twice they had looked up and across the room at him and had taken a swift, comprehensive survey of the few other people in the café, but the movement had been wholly instinctive and mechanical. Evidently they felt entirely secure.

The plump, dark-eyed cashier had caught Warner's eye once or twice. Evidently she remembered him, and her quick smile became almost an invitation to conversation. It was what he wanted, and he hesitated only because he was not sure how the men opposite might regard his approach toward their vicinity.

But he did it very well; and both men, looking up sharply, seemed presently to realize that it was merely a flirtation, and that the young man lounging before the cashier's counter, smiling and being smiled upon, could safely be ignored.

"To be the prettiest girl in Ausone," Warner was saying, "must be a very great comfort to that girl. Don't you think so, *mademoiselle?*"

"To be the most virtuous, *monsieur*, would be far more comforting."

"Have you, then, *both* prizes, *mademoiselle?* I was sure of it!"

"Prizes, *monsieur*?"

"The golden apple and the *prix de la sagesse?*"

She laughed and blushed, detaching from her corsage a rosebud.

"Accept, *monsieur*, the prize for eloquence and for impudence!"

He took it, lifted it to his lips, looking smilingly at her and listening with all the concentration he could summon to the murmuring conversation at the neighboring table. Only a word or two he could catch—perhaps merely guess at—"patron," and "nine o'clock," and "cellar"—at least he imagined he could distinguish these words. And all the time he was up to his ears in a breezy flirtation with a girl very willing, very adept, and perfectly capable of appreciating her own desirability as well as the good points of any casual suitor whom heaven might strand upon her little isolated island for an hour or two. Being French, she was clever and amusing and sufficiently grateful to the gods for this bit of masculine flotsam which had drifted her way.

"There are boats," she said, "and the evening will be beautiful." Having made this clear to him, she smiled and let matters shape their course.

"What pleasure is a boat and a beautiful night to me," he said, "if nobody shares both with me?"

"Alas, *monsieur*, have you no pretty little friend to explain to you the planets of a summer night?"

"Alas, *mademoiselle!*"

"What a pity! Because I have studied astronomy a little. And I recommend it to you as a pretty diversion. They are so high, so unattainable, the stars! It is well for a young man to learn what *is* attainable, and then to address himself to its pursuit. What do you think, *monsieur*?"

"That I should very much like to study astronomy if in all the world there could be discovered anybody amiable enough to teach me!"

"How pathetic! If I only had time—"

"Have you no time at all?"

"It wouldn't do, *mon ami*."

"Why?"

"Because I should be seen going to a rendezvous with you."

"Isn't there any way into the cabaret garden except through the cabaret?"

She shook her head, laughing at him out of her brown eyes.

He waited a moment to control his voice, but there was a tremor in it when he said,

"Is there no way through the cellar?"

She noticed the tremor and liked it. In the lightest and airiest of flirtations, the ardent and unsteady note in a man's voice appeals to any woman to continue and finish his subjugation.

"As for the cellar," she said, "it is true that one can get into the cabaret garden that way. But, *monsieur*, do you imagine that a dark, damp, ghostly, and pitch-black cellar appeals to any woman?"

"Is the cellar so frightful a place, *mademoiselle?*"

"Figure it to yourself! Some twenty stone steps from the pantry yonder"—she nodded her head toward the battered swinging door of leather—"and then more steps, down, down, down—into darkness and dampness, where there are only wine-casks and kegs and bottles and mushrooms and rats and ghosts—"

"What of it—if, as you say, the stars are shining on the river—"

"*Merci!* A girl must certainly be in love to venture through that cellar—and a man, too!"

"Try me; I'll go!"

The girl laughed.

"You! Are you, then, in love already?"

"I would like to prove it. Where is that terrible cellar?"

"Behind the door, there." She waved her hand airily. "Try it! Show me how much you are in love! Perhaps then I'll believe you."

"Will the waiters interfere?"

"See how you try to avoid the test!"

"Try me!"

"Very well. The wash-room is there. If you choose to wash your hands, you are at liberty to do so. And then if you can't slip down into the cellar while the waiters are looking the other way, all I can say is that you are not in love."

He looked at her smilingly, scarcely trusting himself to speak for a moment, for the face of Philippa rose unbidden before his eyes, and a shaft of fear pierced him.

"You are wrong," he said steadily enough; "I am in love. Very honestly, very innocently. It just occurred to me. I

didn't know how deeply I felt. I really am in love—as one loves what is fearless, faithful, and devoted."

"A dog is all that, *monsieur*."

"Occasionally a human being is, also—sometimes even a woman."

Her smile became a little troubled.

"*Monsieur*, are you, then, in love with some woman who possesses these commendable virtues?"

"No; I am in love with her virtues, *mademoiselle*."

"Oh, then she might even be your sister!"

"Exactly. That is the quality of my affection for her."

The pretty cashier laughed.

"You were beginning to make me sad," she said. "I—I am really willing to teach you astronomy, if you truly desire a knowledge of the stars."

"I do—ardently."

"But I am sincerely afraid of the cellar," she murmured. "It is ten o'clock before I am released from duty, and the knowledge that it is ten o'clock at night makes that cellar doubly dark and terrible. I—I don't want to give you a rendezvous down there; and I certainly don't propose to traverse the cellar alone. *Monsieur*, what on earth am I to do?"

"To study the stars on the river, and to reach a rendezvous without being noticed makes it necessary for you to slip out through the cellar, does it not?"

"Alas!"

"Haven't you the courage?"

"I don't know."

"Yes, you have."

"Have I?" She laughed.

"Certainly. I'll go to the wash-room now, and get into the cellar somehow, and make myself acquainted with it. I suppose I ought to have a candle."

She said,

"When I walk home alone at night I have a little electric torch with me. Shall I lend it to you?"

She opened the desk-drawer, drew it out concealed under her handkerchief, and he managed to transfer it to his pocket. It clinked against the loaded automatic pistol, but nobody noticed the sound. But, for a moment, he thought the two men, Meier and Hoffman, had noticed it, because they both got up and came over directly toward him. But they merely wished to pay their reckoning with a hundred-franc note, and

Warner moved aside while they crowded before the pretty cashier's desk, offering heavy pleasantries and ponderous gallantries while she dimpled at them and made change. Then, after tipping the waiter, they went out into the late-afternoon sunshine.

Warner, looking after them, could see that they were crossing the square toward the Boule d'Argent; and he knew that Halkett must have seen them.

Now was his time to investigate the cellar, and he said so to the brown-eyed girl behind the cage, who had been inspecting him rather pensively.

"I ought not to do this," she said.

"Of course not. Otherwise we would not find each other agreeable."

She smiled, looking at him a little more seriously and more attentively.

"It is odd—is it not?" she said, under her breath, "how two people from the opposite ends of the earth chance to meet and—and find each other agreeable?"

"It is delightful," he admitted smilingly.

"I don't even know your name," she remarked, playing with her pencil.

"James."

"Tchames?"—with a pretty attempt to imitate his English.

"Jim is easier."

"Djeem?"

"Perfect!"

"Djeem," she repeated, looking musingly at the tall, well-built American. "*C'est drôle, cet nom là! Djeem?* It is pleasant, too. My name is Jeanne"—she shrugged her youthful shoulders—"nothing extraordinary, you see. Still, I shall try to please you, Monsieur Djeem."

"I dare not hope to please you."

She laughed.

"You *do* please me. Do you suppose otherwise I should dare enter that frightful cellar?"

Under cover of her desk, she deftly detached a key from the bunch at her belt, covered it with her hand, palm down, and let it rest on the counter before him.

"Do you promise to keep away from the wine-bins?" she asked lightly.

"I promise solemnly," he said, and took the key.

"Very well. Then you may go and look at this dreadful cellar at once. And when you behold it, ask yourself how great a goose a girl must be who ventures into it at

ten o'clock at night merely because a young man desires to take a lesson in astronomy on the river Récollette."

XIX

HE had little difficulty in gaining the cellar from the wash-room. Both doors opened out of the pantry passage; he had only to watch the moving figures silhouetted through the pantry doorway, and, when they were out of sight for the moment, he stepped out, unlocked the cellar door, closed it gently behind him, flashed his electric torch, and started down the broad stone steps.

It was one of the big, old-time cellars not unusual in provincial towns, but built, probably, a century before the café and cabaret had been erected on its solid stone foundations.

Two rows of squatty stone pillars supported the low arches of the roof; casks, kegs, bins, empty bottles, broken bottles, and row after row of unsealed wine-bottles lined the alleyways leading in every direction through the darkness.

On either side of the main central corridor stood wine-casks of every shape and size, some very ancient, to judge from the carving and quality of the wood, some more or less modern, some of to-day. Almost all were hoisted on skids with bung and bung-starter in place and old-time jugs and measures of pewter or glass at hand; a few lay empty amid the cellar débris, where the salts born of darkness and dampness dimly glimmered on wall and pavement, and a rustling in unseen straw betrayed the lurking-place of rats.

Warner, playing his flash-light, walked swiftly forward, traversing the three principal alleys in succession. The third round included the little dark runways twisting in and out among the bins, turning sudden angles into obscurity or curving back in a blind circle to the point of entrance.

And as he stood resting for a moment, trying to get his bearings and shifting his electric torch over the labyrinth within which he had become involved, a slight but distinct sound broke the silence around him.

It came from the cellar steps. Somebody had opened the door above. Instantly he extinguished his torch.

Listening, every nerve on edge, he heard footsteps falling cautiously upon the stone

stairway; a white radiance spread and grew brighter at the far end of the vaulted place; and, in a moment more, the blinding star of an electric torch dazzled his eyes where he stood looking out between the cracks of the piled-up boxes which made of the alley in which he had halted a rampart and an *impasse*.

Two men were advancing, shining the way before them.

They seemed to know the place and to be entirely familiar with every alley, for, just before they passed the runway where Warner crouched behind the boxes, they turned aside, played their light over the dusty banks of bottles, chose one, coolly knocked off its neck, and drained it between them in a leisurely manner.

Then, exchanging a few comments in voices too low to be understood, they resumed their course, passed the entrance to the alley where Warner lay hidden, and continued on a few paces.

He could see them as black shapes against the flare of light, saw them halt a few paces from where he stood, saw them reach up and take hold of a huge tun which blocked their progress. Their torch was shining full upon it; he could follow minutely everything they were doing.

One of the men stretched his arms out horizontally and grasped the edges of the immense cask. Then he threw his full weight to the right; the cask swung easily outward, leaving a passageway wide enough for a man. And there, full in the blaze of a brilliant light, there was a door scarcely ten feet away from where he was standing.

The man who had turned the cask went to the door, slid aside a panel, reached in and unbolted it, and had already opened the door when a big bulk loomed up in front of him; a gross, vibrant voice set the hollow echoes growling under the arches of stone and mortar; Wildresse barred their way. He stood there, the torchlight falling full on his round, partly bald and smoothly shaven head; his wicked little ratty eyes were two points of black; his wicked mouth was twisted with profanity.

"*Sacré las de bougres!*" he roared. "I told you to come at nine o'clock, didn't I? What are you doing here then? You, Asticot, you are supposed to have more sense than Squelette, there! Why do you interrupt me before the hour set?"

The man addressed as Asticot—a heavy, bench-legged young man with two *favoris* pasted over his large wide ears—shuffled his shoes uncomfortably.

Squelette, tall, frightfully thin, with his long, furrowed neck of an unclean bird swathed in a red handkerchief, stood sullen and motionless while the glare of his torch streamed over Wildresse.

"*Nom de Dieu!*" shouted the latter. "Aim at my belly and keep that light out of my face, you stupid ass!"

Squelette sulkily shifted his torch; Asticot said, in the nasal, whining voice of the outer boulevards,

"*Voyons, mon vieux*, you have been at it for six hours, and the Skeleton here and I thought you might require our services——"

"Is that so?" snarled Wildresse. "Also, they may require your services in La Roquette."

"They do," remarked Squelette naively.

"You don't have to tell me that," retorted Wildresse. "You'll sneeze for them, too, some day." He turned savagely on Asticot. "I *don't* want you now. I'm busy—do you understand?"

"I understand," replied the Maggot. "All the same, if I may be so bold—what's the use of chattering if there's a job to finish? If there's work to do, do it, and talk afterward. That's my idea."

Wildresse glared at him.

"Really! Very commendable. Such notions of industry ought to be encouraged in the young. But the trouble with you, Asticot, is that you haven't anything inside that sucked-out orange you think is a head. Whatever mental work is to be done, I shall do. Do you comprehend me, *imbécile*? Now, take your friend, the Skeleton, and take your torch and yourself out of this cellar. Get out, or I'll bash your face in—you dirty little bandy-legged, blood-lapping cockroach!"

His big, pock-pitted, hairless face became frightful in its concentrated ferocity; both men made simultaneous and involuntary movements to the rear.

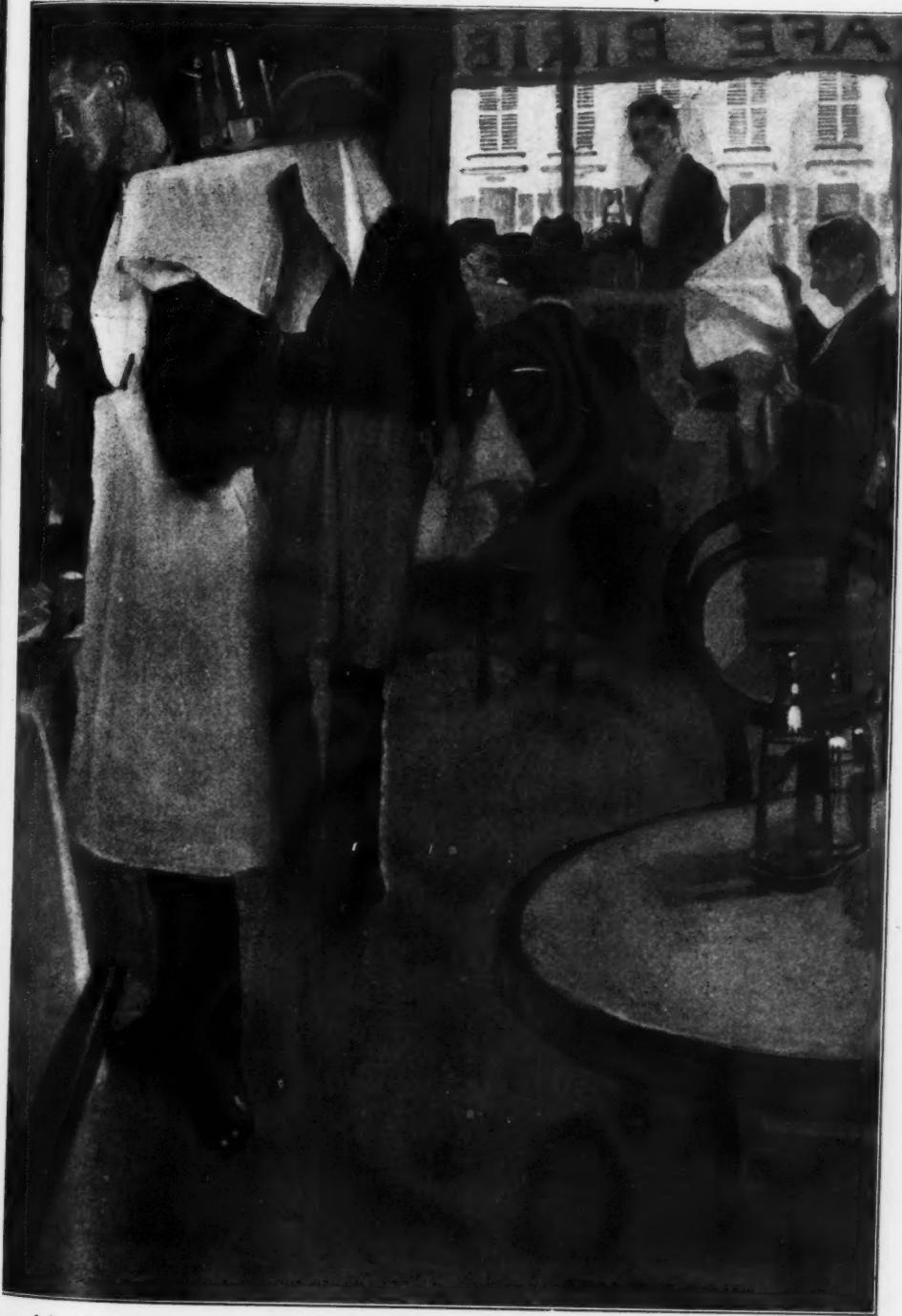
"You'll come at nine o'clock, do you hear?" he roared. "And you'll bring a sack with you and enough weight to keep it sunk! You, Maggot; you, Skeleton, do you understand? Very well; clear out!"

The young ruffians made no response: Asticot turned and made his way through



DRAWN BY FRANK CRAIG

Under its orange-and-white awning, the tables on the terrace were



crowded with people lingering over after-luncheon coffee and cognac

the narrow passage; the Skeleton shuffled on his heels, shining his torch ahead.

Half-way down the central corridor they helped themselves to two more bottles of Bordeaux, pocketing them in silence, and continued on their course.

Listening, Warner could hear them ascending the stone stairs, hear the door click above as they left the cellar. But his eyes remained fixed on Wildresse, who still stood in the door, darkly outlined against the dull gaslight burning somewhere behind him.

Once or twice he looked at the great cask, which the two *voyous* had not troubled to close into its place behind them. And Wildresse did not bother to go out and swing the cask back into place, but, as soon as he caught the sound of the closing cellar door, he stepped back and shut his own door.

But he must either have forgotten or carelessly neglected to close the open panel in it, for the lighted square remained visible, illuminating the narrow passage after Warner heard him bolt the door on the inside. His retreating footsteps were audible for some distance before the sound of them died away; and Warner knew then that the door belonged to the cabaret, and that behind its bolted shutters and its police-seals, Wildresse had been lurking since his return from Saïs.

There was no need to use his torch as he crept out of his ambush and entered the narrow lane behind the big cask.

With infinite precaution he thrust his arm through the open panel, felt around until he found the two bolts, slid them noiselessly back. The door swung open, inward. He went in softly.

The place appeared to be a lumber-room littered with odds and ends. Beyond was a passage in which a gas-jet burned, at the end of it a stairway leading up.

The floor creaked in spite of him, but the stairs were carpeted. They led up to a large butler's pantry; and, through the sliding door, he peered out into the dim interior of the empty cabaret.

Through cracks in the closed shutters rays from the setting sun pierced the gloom, making objects vaguely distinct—tables and chairs piled one upon the other around the dancing-floor, the gaudy decorations pendent from the ceiling, the shrouded music-stands, the cashier's desk, where he had first set eyes on the girl Philippa.

With the memory, his heart almost

ceased, then leaped with the resurgence of his fear for her; he looked around him until he discovered a leather swinging door, and, when he opened it, a wide hallway lay before him and stairs rose beyond.

Over the thick carpet he hastened, then up the stairs cautiously, listening at every step. Somewhere above, coming apparently from behind a closed door, he heard the heavy vibration of a voice, and knew whose it was. Guided by it along the upper passageway, he passed the open doors of several bedrooms, card-rooms, private dining-rooms, all empty and the furniture covered with sheets, until he came to a closed door.

Behind it, the heavy voice of Wildresse sounded menacingly; he waited until it rose to a roar, then tried the door under cover of the noise within. It was locked, and he stood close to it, listening, striving to think out the best way. Behind the locked door Wildresse was shouting now, and Warner heard every word.

"By God," he roared, in English, "you had better not try to lie to me! Do you want your neck twisted?"

There was no reply.

"I ask you again, what did you do with that paper I gave you by mistake?" he repeated.

Suddenly Warner's heart stood still as Philippa's voice came to him.

"I burnt it!"

"You burnt it? You lie!"

"I never lie," came the subdued voice.

"How dared you touch it at all?"

"You handed it to me," she said wearily.

"And you knew it was a mistake, you treacherous cat! My God! Have I nourished you for this, you little snake, that you turn your poisonous teeth on me?"

"Perhaps—but not on my country."

"Your country! You miserable foundling, did you suppose yourself French?"

"France is the only country I have known. I refuse to betray her."

"France!" he shouted. "France! A hell of a country to snivel about! You can't tell me anything about France—the dirty kennel full of mongrels that it is! France? To hell with France!"

"What has she done for me? What has she done *to* me? Chased me out of Paris, forced my only son into her filthy army, hunted us both without mercy, finally hunted my son into the battalions of Biribi—me into this damned pig-pen of Ausone!"

That's what France has done to me and mine—blackmailed me into playing the *mouchard* for her, forcing me to play spy for her by threatening to hunt me into New Caledonia!

"By God, I break even, though! I sell her every chance I get, and what I sell to her she has to pay for, too! Believe me, she pays for it a hundred times over!"

There came a silence, then Wildresse's voice again, rumbling, threatening.

"Who was that *type* you went to visit in Saïs at the Golden Peach?"

No answer.

"Do you hear, you little fool?"

"I hear you," she said, in a tired voice.

"You won't tell?"

"No."

"Why? Is he your lover?"

"No."

"Oh, you merely got your wages, eh?"

No answer.

"In other words, you're launched, eh? You aspire to turn *cocotte*, eh?"

"I am employed by him quite honestly."

"Very touching. Such a nice young man, isn't he? And how much did you tell him about me, eh?"

No reply.

"Did you inform him that I was a very bad character?" he sneered. "Did you tell him what a hard time you had? Did you explain to him that a pious Christian really could not live any longer with such a man as I am? *Did you?*"

"To be compelled to seek information for my government has made me very unhappy," she said. "But to betray that government—that is not in me to do. I had rather die—I think, anyway, that I had rather not—live—any longer."

"Is that so? Is that all the spirit you have? What are you, anyway—a worm? Have you no anger in you against the country which has kicked you and me out of Paris into this filthy kennel called Ausone? Have you no resentment toward the government that has attempted to beggar us both—the government which bullies us, threatens us, blackmails us, forbids us entry into the capital, keeps us tied up here like dogs to watch and bark at strangers and whine away our lives on starvation wages, when we could make our fortunes in Paris?"

"I don't know what you did."

"What of it? Suppose I broke a few of their laws? Is that a reason to kick me

from place to place and finally tie me up here?"

"I—don't know."

"Oh, don't know!" he mimicked her. "If you had any gratitude in your treacherous little body, you'd stick to me now. You'd rejoice at my vengeance. You'd laugh to know that I am paying back the country which insulted me in her own coin. That's what you'd do, instead of sniveling around about 'treachery' and 'betraying France.' And, by God—now that war has come, you'll see your beloved France torn into pieces by the *Boches*! That's what you'll see—France ripped into tatters!"

"Yes; and that sight will repay me for all that has been done to me—that revenge I shall have—soon. *Then, we'll see!* Then, perhaps I'll get my recognition from the *Boches*!"

"What do I care for France—or for them either? I'm of no nation; I'm nothing; I'm for myself! The *Boches* were the kinder to me, and they get what I don't need, *voilà tout!*" There came a long pause, and then Wildresse's heavy tones once more. "I'll give you your chance. Yes; in spite of your treachery and your ingratitude, I'll give you your chance! You have a brain—such as it is. It's a woman's brain, of course, but it can figure out on which side the bread is buttered.

"Listen: I ought to twist your neck. You've tried to put mine into the *lunette*. You could have sent me up against a dead wall if you had given that paper you burnt to the *Flics*. No; you didn't. You enjoyed a crisis of nerves and you burnt it. I know you burnt it, because I admit that you tell the truth.

"*Bon!* Now, therefore, I do not instantly twist your neck. No; on the contrary, I reason with you. I do not turn you over to the *sergots*. I could! Why? *Voyons*, let us be reasonable. I was not hatched yesterday. No; do you suppose I have trusted you all these years without having taken any little precautions? *Tiens*, you are beginning to look at me, eh? Well, then, listen: If in future you have any curiosity concerning *lunettes* and dead walls, let me inform you that you are qualified to embellish either.

"*Tiens!* You seem startled. It never occurred to you to ask why I have had certain papers written out by you, or why I have had you affix your pretty signature to so many little documents which you could not read because the ink was invisible.

"No; you have never thought about such matters, have you? But, all the same, I have all I require to make you sneeze into the basket, or to play blind man's buff between a dead wall and a squad of execution.

"And now—now that you know enough to hold your tongue, will you hold it in future and be honest and loyal to the hand that picked you out of the gutter and that has fed you ever since?"

There was a silence.

"Will you?" he repeated.

"No!"

A bull-like roar burst from Wildresse.

"I'll twist your neck for you, and I'll do it now!" he bellowed. "I'll snap that white neck of yours——"

The next instant, Warner struck the door such a blow with his doubled fist that the jarring sound silenced the roar of rage that had burst from Wildresse at Philippa's answer, and checked the heavy scuffle of his great feet, too.

Already Warner had drawn back, pistol lifted, gathered together to throw his full weight against the door and hold it the moment it was opened from inside.

The sudden stillness which followed his blow lasted but a few seconds; heavy steps approached the door, halted, approached irresolutely, stopped short. Then ensued another period of quiet, and Warner, listening, could hear the breathing of Wildresse on the other side of the door.

Minute after minute passed. Wildresse, still as a tiger, never stirred, and even his suppressed breathing became inaudible after a while.

Warner, pistol in hand, ready to throw himself against the door the instant it moved on the crack, bent over and placed his ear close against the paneling. After a while, he detected the sound of footsteps cautiously retreating, and realized that Wildresse did not intend to open the door.

He knocked again loudly. The steps continued to recede; somewhere another door was unbolted and opened, and the stealthy, retreating footsteps continued on beyond ear-shot.

Again he knocked heavily with the butt of his pistol, waited, listened, then drew back and fairly hurled himself against the door. It scarcely even creaked; he might as well have attempted to push over the retaining wall of the corridor itself.

"Philippa!" he called. "Philippa!"

A low cry answered him; he heard her stir suddenly.

But as he grasped the door-knob and shook it in his excitement and impatience, over his shoulder he caught a glimpse of a gross, hairless face slyly peering around the further corner of the corridor. It disappeared immediately.

"Open the door, Philippa!" he cried. "Open quick!"

"Warner, *mon ami*, I can't! He took the key!" she called through to him. "Oh, Warner, what am I to do!"

"All right, wait there!" He turned and ran for the further end of the corridor, sprang around the corner without hesitating, sped forward, now fiercely intent on the destruction of Wildresse. But the *patron* had fled. He ran forward, turned another corner in the dim light of locked shutters, but found no trace of the bulky quarry he hunted, heard nothing, halted, breathing fast and hard, trying to establish his bearings.

A stair-well plunged downward into shadowy depths just ahead; he stole forward and looked over. Carpeted steps vanished into the darkness below.

Doors, all locked, faced him everywhere; he ran along them, trying each as he passed, came to an angle of solid wall, stepped around it, pistol extended; and it was a miracle he was not startled into pulling trigger when a door was torn open in his very face, and a figure, dark against the fiery sunset, framed by a window, sprang forward.

"Warner, *mon ami*, je suis là!" Philippa cried joyously, flinging both arms around his neck; but he stood white and trembling with the nearness of her destruction at his hands, holding the shaking pistol wide from her body and unable to utter a word.

And, as he stood there, one arm around her thin body, somewhere below and behind him a door burst open and there came a muffled rush of feet up the stairway from the darkness below.

He pushed her violently away from him, but before he could turn and spring to the stair-head, three men leaped into the passage, their weapons spitting red flashes through the dusky corridor, and he jumped backward, dragging Philippa with him into the room behind them, slammed the door, and bolted, chained, and locked it.

In Ambitious Beauty

NAN CARTER is a real beauty from California who has strong faith that by hard work she will attain her ambition for a high place on the stage. She has made a start in "Miss Information" — the first step in a promising career.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CAMPBELL STUDIOS, 518 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK

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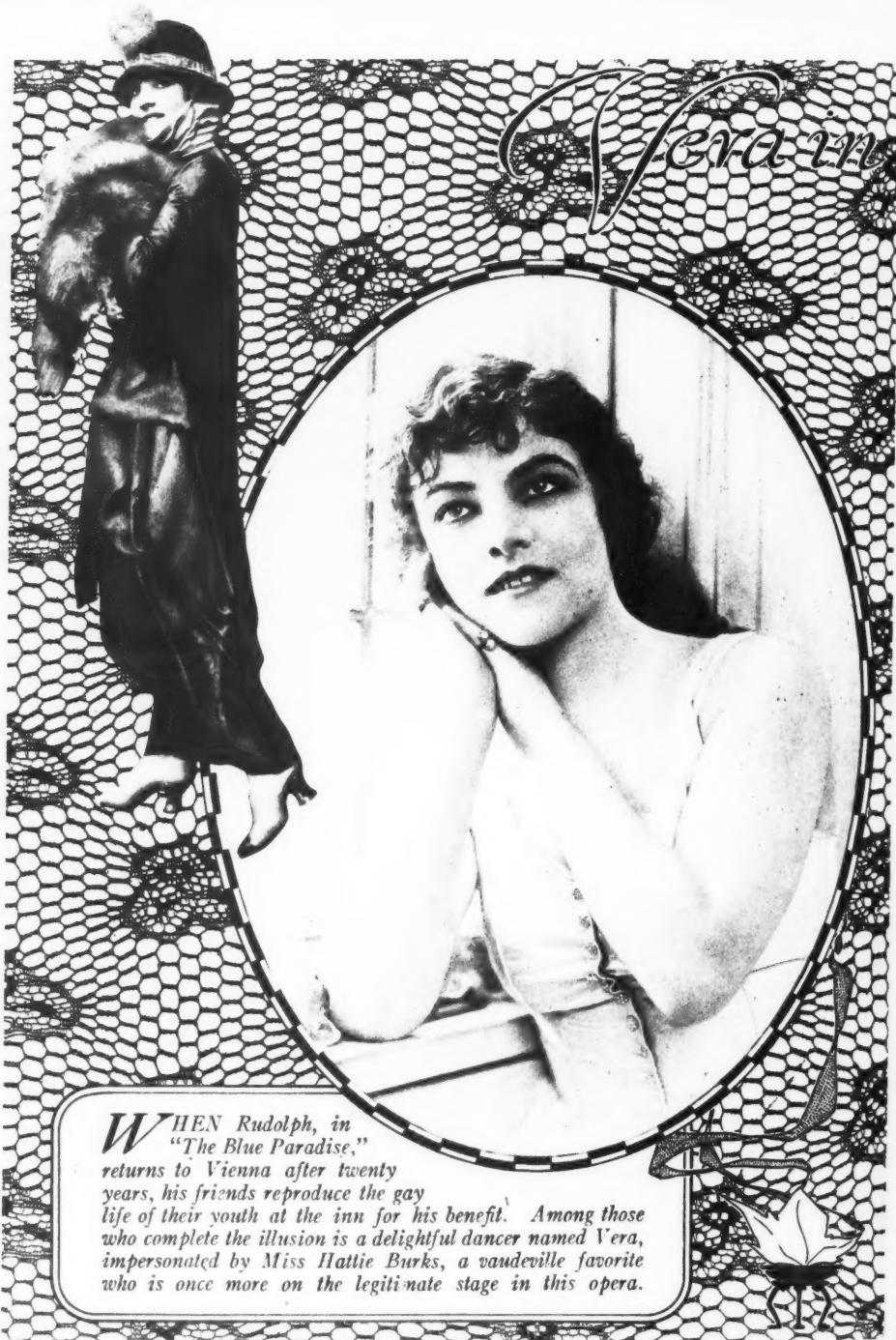


SWEET sixteen is Miss Sybil Carmen, and full of ambition to be, some day, a real dramatic actress. Meanwhile, she has proved her talent and her charm by her singing and dancing in the "Midnight Frolic" atop the New Amsterdam Theatre, whither joy-loving

New Yorkers flock after the white lights have disappeared from Broadway and more sedate folk have gone home to bed.

Winsome Lassie





WHEN Rudolph, in
"The Blue Paradise,"
returns to Vienna after twenty
years, his friends reproduce the gay
life of their youth at the inn for his benefit. Among those
who complete the illusion is a delightful dancer named Vera,
impersonated by Miss Hattie Burks, a vaudeville favorite
who is once more on the legitimate stage in this opera.



A Merry



*A*MERICAN theatergoers hold the dainty Quaker Girl of Ina Claire in such fond memory that they must always have an imitation of herself in that delightful rôle. This season, as leader of the merry "Follies of 1915," the clever impersonator has added Mrs. Vernon Castle and Frances Starr as Marie-Odile to her repertory of imitations, which includes Harry Lauder, who uses parts of Miss Claire's imitation of himself in his own work.

Mimic



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Aladdin's Goddess



WHEN the modern Aladdin rubs the lamp in "Chin-Chin," a lovely goddess appears in the person of Miss Mildred Richardson, instead of the horrible afrit that obeyed the commands of his prototype.

Fortunes in Films

The Trufflers Embark on a Wonderful Enterprise

"The Trufflers" is a name invented by Peter Ericson Mann, a playwright, to designate a group of radical young people in the quaint Greenwich Village section of New York City, whose lives are an application of some very modern theories founded upon the doctrines of certain rebellious individualists to whom the majority of social conventions are intolerable fetters. Peter is not one of them—far from it; but he has become interested in one very fascinating truffler. You will find her fascinating, too, and have a rare treat coming to you in this series of short stories, which will relate a number of interesting and amusing situations growing out of Peter's concern for the welfare of this—to him—misguided young woman.

By Samuel Merwin

Author of "The Honey Bee," "Anthony the Absolute," etc.

Illustrated by George Gibbs

PETER ERICSON MANN came stealthily into the rooms on the seventh floor of the old bachelor-apartment building on Washington Square. His right hand, deep in a pocket of his overcoat, clutched a thin, very new book, bound in pasteboard. It was late on a Friday afternoon near the lamb-like close of March. The rooms were empty—which fact brought relief to Peter.

He crossed the studio to the decrepit flat-top desk between the two windows. With an expression of solemnity on his long face, he unlocked the middle drawer on the end next the wall. Within, on a heap of manuscripts, letters, and contracts, lay five other thin little books. He spread these in a row on the desk, and added the new one. On each was the name of a savings-bank printed, and his own name written. No one—least of all his two roommates (the three, years back, had been dubbed the "Seventh-Story Men")—knew of these books. They represented savings aggregating nearly seven thousand dollars.

Seven thousand dollars, for a bachelor of thirty-three, may seem enough to you. It did not seem enough to Peter. In fact, he was now studying the six little books with more than a suggestion of anxiety on his face. You worked desperately to get a little money. And then you worried yourself to death in the fear of losing it.

Peter was no financier; and the thought of adventuring his savings on the turbulent, uncharted seas of finance filled his mind with terrors. Savings-banks appealed to him because they were built solidly of stone, and had immense iron gratings at windows and doors. And, too, you couldn't draw money without going to some definite personal trouble. It is only fair to add that the books represented all he had or would ever have unless he could get more. Nobody paid Peter a salary. No banker or attorney had a hand in taxing his income at the source. His new play, "The Truffler," might succeed and make him mildly rich; or it might die in a night, leaving the thousand-dollar "advance against royalties" as his entire income from more than a year of work. His last two plays *had* failed. Plays usually failed: eighty or ninety per cent. of them—yes, a good ninety!

Theoretically, the seven thousand dollars should carry him two or three years. Practically, they might not carry him one. For he couldn't possibly know in advance what he would do with them.

Peter sighed, put the six little books away, and locked the drawer—locked it with sudden swiftness and caution, for Hy Lowe just then burst in the outer door and dove, humming a one-step, into the bedroom.

Peter, pocketing the keys, put on a casual front and followed him there.

Fortunes in Films

Hy, still in overcoat and hat, was gazing with rapt eyes at a snap-shot of two girls. He laughed a little, self-conscious at sight of Peter, and set the picture against the mirror on his side of the bureau.

There were other pictures stuck about Hy's end of the mirror—all of girls, and not all discreet. One of these, pushed aside to make room for the new one, fell to the floor. Hy let it lie.

Peter leaned over and peered at the snapshot. He recognized the two girls as Betty Deane and her roommate, Sue Wilde.

Peter knew them—Sue, in particular. She was the bachelor girl at whom he had written "The Truffler." Her frank radicalism frightened the cautious, conservative bachelor; her grace of body and quickness of mind stirred and fascinated him.

"Look here," said Peter: "Where have you been?"

"Having a dish of tea."

"Don't you *ever* work?"

"Since friend Betty turned up, my son, I'm wondering if I ever shall."

Peter grunted. His gaze was centered not on Hy's friend Betty but on the slim, familiar figure on the right.

"Just you two?"

"Sue came in. Look here, Pete: I'm generous. I get Betty; you get Sue."

Peter, deepening gloom on his face, sat down abruptly on the bed.

"Easy, my son," observed Hy sagely, "or that girl will be going to your head. That's your trouble, Pete: you take 'em seriously. And, believe me, it won't do!"

"It isn't that, Hy—I'm not in love with her." There was a silence while Hy removed garments.

"It isn't that," protested Peter again. "No; it isn't that. She irritates me. Any anybody else there?" he asked.

"Only that fellow, Zanin. He came in with Sue. By the way, he wants to see you. He says things are coming along fast with him, and he is sure he can interest you."

Peter did not hear all of this. At the mention of Zanin, he got up suddenly and rushed into the studio.

Hy glanced after him, then hummed a hesitation waltz as he cut the new picture in half with the manicure scissors and put Sue on Peter's side of the bureau.

This isn't a smoothly arranged set of stories; it's a hit or miss lot of episodes, one

situation growing out of another, all mixed up (like life, perhaps) and yet (life again!) progressing steadily toward a definite set of results. If Peter hadn't been stale and world-weary, he wouldn't have been wasting time over in Greenwich Village, staring at the one forgotten theatrical poster that still exhibited his faded name to a heedless, on-rushing city—the single lingering memory of his last small success. Nor would he have met Sue Wilde on a curbstone eating an apple; nor have had the curious talk down in Jim's oyster-house, in the course of which Sue told him that his plays were dreadful and his ideas worse; nor found himself lured to see her play the newsboy in "Any Street" at Jacob Zanin's little Crossroads Theater, where Art and Amateurism reigned in haughty heedlessness of the box-office man; nor have got himself worked up into such a state of excitement over her that he wrote "The Truffler" in a week and sold it to the mighty Max Neuermann in a day. "The Trufflers" was Peter's name for the experimentally anarchistic Greenwich Village set, asserters of self in a bourgeois world. Sue Wilde, Peter felt, was a truffler who might yet be saved.

The outer result of all this was that new bank-book. The inner result was that Peter couldn't, all at once, stop being excited.

The Worm came in, dropped coat and hat on a chair, and settled himself to his pipe and the evening paper. Peter, stretched on the couch, greeted him with a grunt. (The Worm's name was Henry Bates.) Hy appeared, in undress, and attacked the piano with half-suppressed exuberance.

It was the Worm's settled habit to read straight through the paper without a word, then to stroll out to dinner, alone or with the other two, as it happened, either silent or making quietly casual remarks that you didn't particularly need to answer if you didn't feel like it. He wasn't trivial and gay, like Hy, or burning with inner ambitions and desires, like Peter.

On this occasion, however, he broke bounds. Slowly the paper, not half read, sank to his knees. He smoked up a pipeful thus. Finally he spoke.

"Saw Sue Wilde to-day—met her outside the Parisian, and we had lunch together."

Peter shot a glance at him.

The Worm, oblivious of Peter, tamped his pipe with a pencil and spoke again.



"Proceed," said Hy. "Your narrative interests me strangely." "Well," said the Worm slowly, "Zanin is about ready to put over his big scheme."

"Been trying to make her out. She and I have had several talks. I can't place her."

This was so unusual — from the Worm it amounted to an outburst — that even Hy, swinging around from the yellow keyboard, waited in silence.

"You fellows know Greenwich Village," the musing one went on, puffing slowly and following with his eyes the curling smoke. "You know the dope—'Oats for Women!' somebody called it—that a woman must be free as a man, free to go to the devil if she

chooses. You know, so often, when these feminine professors of freedom talk to you —well, by the second quarter-hour you find yourself solemnly talking Woman's complete life, rights of the unmarried mother, birth-control; and after you've got away from the lady, you can't, for the life of you, figure out how those topics ever got started. I don't want to knock—got too much respect for the real idealists here in the Village, but you fellows do know how you get to anticipating that stuff and discounting it before it

comes; and you can't help seeing that the woman is more often than not just dressing up ungoverned desires in sociological language, that she's leaping at the chance to experiment with emotions that women have had to suppress for ages. Back of it is the new Russianism they live and breathe—to know no right or wrong, trust your instincts, respond to your emotions, 'bow to your desires— Well, now, here's Sue Wilde. She looks like a regular little radical. And acts it. Breaks away from her folks—lives with the regular bunch in the Village—takes up public dancing and acting—smokes her cigarettes—yet, I've dined with her once, lunched with her once, spent five hours in her apartment talking Isadora Duncan as against Pavlova, even walked the streets half a night arguing about what she calls the Truth—and we haven't got around to birth-control yet."

"How do you dope it out?" asked Hy.

"Well"—the Worm deliberately thought out his reply—"I think she's so. Most of 'em aren't so. She's a real, natural oasis in a desert of *posesurs*. Probably that's why I worry about her."

"Why worry?" from Hy.

"True enough. But I do worry. It's the situation she has drifted into, I suppose. If she were really mature, you'd let her look out for herself. It's the old he-protective instinct in me, I suppose—the one thing on earth she would resent more than anything else. But this fellow Zanin—"

He painstakingly made a smoke ring and sent it toward the tarnished brass hook on the window-frame. It missed. He tried again. Peter stirred uncomfortably, there on the couch.

"What has she told you about Zanin?" he asked, desperately controlling his voice.

"She doesn't know that she has told me much of anything. But she has talked her work and prospects. And the real story comes through. She is frank, you know."

Peter suppressed a groan. She was frank!

"Zanin is in love with her. Has been for a year or more. He wrote 'Any Street' for her. He has been tireless at helping her work up her dancing and pantomime. Why, as near as I can see, the man has been downright devoting his life to her all this time. It's rather impressive. But, then, Zanin is impressive."

Peter broke out now.

"Does he expect to marry her—Zanin?"

"Marry her? Oh, no!"

"Oh, no?" Good God, then——"

"Oh, come, Pete; you surely know Zanin's attitude toward marriage. He has written enough on the subject. And lectured—and put it in those plays of his."

"What is his attitude?"

"That marriage is immoral. Worse than immoral—vicious."

"And what does she say to all this?" This from Hy, for Peter was speechless.

"Simply that he doesn't rouse any emotional response in her. I'm not sure that she isn't a little sorry he doesn't. She would be honest, you know. And that's the thing about Sue—my guess about her, at least—that she will never approach love irresponsibly, as an experiment or an experience. It will have to be the real thing."

He tried again, in his slow, calm way, to hang a smoke ring on the brass hook.

"Proceed," said Hy. "Your narrative interests me strangely."

"Well," said the Worm slowly, "Zanin is about ready to put over his big scheme. He has contrived, at last, to get one of the managers interested. And it hangs on Sue's personality. The way he has worked it out with her, planning it as a concrete expression of that half-wild, natural self of hers—I doubt if it, this particular thing, could be done without her. It is Sue—an expressed, interpreted Sue."

"This must be the thing he is trying to get Pete in on," said Hy.

"The same. Zanin knows that where he fails is on the side of popularity. He has intelligence and force—but he hasn't the trick of reaching the crowd. And he is smart enough to see what he needs and go after it."

"He is going after the crowd, then?"

"Absolutely."

"And what becomes of the noble artistic standards he's been bleeding and dying for?"

"I don't know. He really has been bleeding and dying. You have to admit that. He lives in one mean room, over there in Fourth Street. A good deal of the little he eats, he cooks with his own hands on a kerosene-stove. He works twenty and thirty hours at a stretch over his productions at the Crossroads. If it were just a matter of picking up money, he could easily go back into newspaper work or the press-agent game—I'm not sure that the man

isn't full of a struggling genius that hasn't really begun to find expression. If he is, it will drive him into bigger and bigger things. He'll fight his way through to complete self-expression, blindly, madly, using everything that comes in his way, trampling on everything that he can't use."

Peter, twitching with irritation, sat up and snorted out,

"For God's sake, what's the *scheme*?"

The Worm regarded Peter thoughtfully and not unhumorously, as if reflecting further over his observations on genius. Then he explained.

"He's going to preach the Greenwich Village freedom on every little moving-picture screen in America—shout the new naturalism to a hypocritical world."

"Has he worked out his story?" asked Hy.

"In the rough, I think. But he wants a practical theatrical man to give it form and put it over. That's where Pete comes in. Get it? It's daring stuff. He'll use Sue's finest quality, her faith, as well as her grace of body. What I could get of it sounds a good deal like the Garden of Eden story without the moral. An Artzibashev paradise. Sue says that she'll have to wear a pretty primitive costume."

"Which doesn't bother her, I imagine," said Hy.

"Not a bit."

Peter, leaning back on stiff arms, staring at the opposite wall, suddenly found repictured to his mind's eye a dramatic little scene. It was on that evening when he first went to see Sue in "Any Street." In the Crossroads Theater, out by the ticket-entrance; the audience in their seats, old Wilde, the Walrus himself, the pietistic father from whose household Sue had plunged forth in utter revolt of spirit. You knew the man as the Reverend Doctor Hubbell Harkness Wilde, publisher and editor of that sensational missionary weekly, *My Brother's Keeper*, of which sheet Hy Lowe was managing editor. The Walrus was Hy's name for Doctor Wilde. Just what he meant by it I am not certain: unless it was that the man was given to weeping as he raked his human oyster-bed. Doctor Wilde wore oddly primitive, early-Methodist dress. Sue was in her newsboy costume, hair cut short under the ragged felt hat, face painted for the stage, her deep-green eyes blazing. The father had said, "You have no shame, then—appearing

like this?" To which the daughter had replied, "Thank God—no!"

Hy was speaking again.

"You don't mean to say that Zanin will be able to draw Sue into this scheme?"

The Worm nodded, very thoughtful.

"Yes; she is going into it, I think."

Peter broke out again.

"But—but—but—but—"

"You fellows want to get this thing straight in your heads," the Worm continued, ignoring Peter. "Her reasons aren't by any means so weak. In the first place, the thing comes to her as a real chance to put over in the widest possible way her own protest against conventionality. As Zanin has told her, she will be able to express naturalness and honesty of life to millions where Isadora Durcan, with all her perfect art, can reach only thousands. Yes; Zanin is appealing to her best qualities. And, at that, I'm not at all sure that he isn't honest in it."

"Honest!" snorted Peter.

"Yes, honest. I don't say he is. I say I'm not sure. Then another argument with her is that he has really been helping her to grow. Obligations have grown up there, you see. She knows that his whole heart is in it, that it's probably his big chance; and while the girl is modest enough, she can see how dependent the whole plan is on her."

"But—but—but—" Peter again—"think what she'll find herself up against—the people she'll have to work with—the vulgarity—"

"I don't know," mused the Worm. "I'm not sure it would bother her much. Somehow, those things don't seem to touch her."

The Worm gave himself up again to the experiment with smoke rings. He blew one—another—a third—at the curtain-hook. The fourth wavered down over the hook, hung a second, broke, and trailed off into the atmosphere. "Got it!" said the Worm to himself.

"Who's the manager he's picked up?" asked Hy.

"Fellow named Silverstone. Head of a 'movie' producing company."

Peter, to whom this name was, apparently, the last straw, shivered a little, sprang to his feet, and, for the second time within the hour, rushed blindly off into solitude.

When Hy set out for dinner, he found Peter sitting on a bench in the square.

"Go in and get your overcoat," said Hy, "unless you're out for pneumonia."

"Hy," said Peter, his color vivid, his eyes wild, "we can't let those brutes play with Sue like that. We've got to save her."

In Peter's plays, some one—a mother, an uncle, an elder sister, an obscure and scorned lover—was always "saving" an innocent young girl by an act of extravagant self-sacrifice.

Hy squinted down at his bamboo stick.

"Very good, my son. But just how?"

"If I could talk with her, Hy!"

"You could call her up—"

"Call her up nothing! I can't ask to see her and start cold." He gestured vehemently. "Look here: You're seeing Betty every day—you fix it."

Hy mused.

"They're great hands to take tramps in the country, those two. Most every Sunday. If I could arrange a little party of four—see here: Betty's going to have dinner with me to-morrow night. We thought of riding down to Coney."

"For God's sake, Hy, get me in on it!"

"Now you just wait! Sue'll be playing to-morrow night at the Crossroads." Peter's face fell. "But it gives me the chance to talk it over with friend Betty and perhaps plan for Sunday. If Zanin'll just leave her alone that long."

"It isn't as if I were thinking of myself, Hy—"

"Of course not, Pete!"

"The girl's in danger. We've got to save her."

"What if she won't listen?"

"Then," said Peter, flaring up with a righteous passion, "then I will go straight to Zanin and force him to declare himself. I will face him, as man to man!"

Thus the two Seventh-Story Men!

Hy and the Worm slept in the bedroom; Peter, because of spasmodic night work, in the studio on the couch. But Peter's performance over that Friday night could hardly be called sleeping. And Saturday night (or early Sunday morning) when Hy crept in, Peter, in pajamas, all lights out, was sitting by the window nursing a headache, staring out at the empty square.

"Worm here?" asked Hy guardedly.

"Asleep. Did you fix it?"

Hy lighted the gas; then looked closely at the nerve-racked Peter.

"Look here, my son," he said, then, "you need sleep."

"Sleep!" muttered Peter. "Good God!"

"Yes, I know; but you've got a delicate job on your hands."

Hy was removing his overcoat. Suddenly he gave way to a soft little chuckle.

"For Heaven's sake, don't laugh!"

"I was thinking of something else. Yes; I fixed it. But there's something up—a new deal. Silverstone saw 'Any Street' last night and went dippy over Sue. Betty told me that much, but says she can't tell me the rest. Only it came out that Zanin has dropped the idea of bringing you into it. Silverstone bought supper for the girls and Zanin last night, and this afternoon he took Zanin out to his Long Beach house for the night—in a big car—and took his stenographer along. Everybody's mysterious and in a hurry."

"So I'm out!" muttered Peter, between set teeth. "But it's no mystery. Think I don't know Silverstone?"

"What'll he do?"

"Freeze out everybody and put Sue across himself. What's that guy's is his."

"But will Sue let him freeze Zanin out?"

"That's a point— But if she won't, he'll be wise in a minute. Trust Silverstone! He'll let Zanin *think* he's in, then."

"Things look worse, I take it."

"A lot."

Hy was undressing. He sat now, caught by a sudden fragrant memory, holding a shoe in mid-air, and chuckled again.

"Stop that cackle!" growled Peter. "You said you fixed it."

"I did. We leave at eleven, Hudson Tunnel, for the Jersey hills—we four. I bring the girls; you meet us at the tunnel. Zanin is safe at Long Beach. We eat at a country road-house. We walk miles in the open country. We drift home in the evening, God knows when! Here I hand you, in one neat parcel, pleasant hillsides, purling brooks, twelve mortal hours of the blessed damsel, and"—he caught up the evening paper—"fair and warmer, and perfect weather. And what do I get? Abuse, Nothing but abuse."

With this, he deftly juggled his two shoes, caught both in a final flourish, looked across at the abject Peter, and grinned.

"Shut up!" muttered Peter wearily.

"Very good, sir. And you go to bed."

Into Peter's brain, as he hurried toward



DRAWN BY GEORGE GIBBS

He saw his little party coming in through the gate. The two girls wore sweaters. Their skirts were short, their tan shoes low and flat of heel

the tunnel station, the next morning, darted an uninvited, startling thought:

Here was Zanin, idealist in the drama, deserting the stage for the screen!

What was it the Worm had represented him as saying to Sue—that she would be enabled to express her ideals to millions where Isadora Duncan could reach only thousands?

Millions in place of thousands!

His imagination pounced on the thought. He stopped short on the street to consider it—until a small boy laughed; then he hurried on.

He looked with new eyes at the billboards he passed. Two-thirds of them flaunted moving-picture features. He had been passing such posters for a year or more without once reading out of them a meaning personal to himself. He had been sticking blindly, doggedly, to plays—ninety per cent. of which, of all plays, failed utterly. It suddenly came home to him that the greatest dramatists, like the greatest actors and actresses, were working for the camera. All but himself, apparently! Why, he himself patronized “movies” more often than plays! Yet he had stupidly refused to catch the significance of it. “The Truffler” would fail, of course—just as the two before it had failed. Still, he had, until this actual minute, clung to it as his one hope.

Millions for thousands! He was thinking not of persons but of dollars.

He saw his little party coming in through the gate. The two girls wore sweaters. Their skirts were short, their tan shoes low and flat of heel.

They were attractive, each in her individual way—Sue less regular as to features, but brighter, slimmer, more alive; Betty’s more luxurious figure was set off almost too well by the snug sweater. And she was, Peter decided, unconscious neither of the sweater nor of the body within it.

Just before the train roared in, while Sue, all alertness, was looking out along the track, Peter saw Hy’s hand brush Betty’s. For an instant their fingers intertwined; then the hands drifted casually apart.

Peter joined them then.

They lunched, an hour’s ride out in northern New Jersey, at a little motorist’s tavern to which Hy guided them. After which they set forth on what was designed to be a four-hour tramp through the hills to another railroad—Sue and Peter ahead, Hy and Betty lagging behind.

The road curved over hills and down into miniature valleys. There were expanses of plowed fields, groves of tall, bare trees, groups of farmhouses. Robins hopped beside the road. The bright sun mitigated the crisp sting in the air. A sense of early spring touched eye and ear and nostril.

Peter felt it, breathed more deeply, actually smiled. Sue threw back her head and hummed softly. Hy and Betty dropped farther and farther behind. Once Sue turned and waved them on, then stood and laughed with sheer good humor at their deliberate, unrythmical step.

“Come on,” she said to Peter; “they don’t get it—the joy of it. You have to walk with a steady swing. It takes you a mile or two, at that, to get going. When I’m in my stride, it carries me along so I hate to stop at all. You know, you can’t pick it up again right off—the real swing. Walking is a game—a fine game!”

Peter didn’t know. He had never thought of walking as a game. But he found himself responding eagerly.

“You’ve gone in a lot for athletics,” said he, thinking of the lightness, the sheer ease with which she had moved about the little Crossroads stage.

“Oh yes—at school and college—basketball, running, fencing, dancing, and this sort of thing—dancing especially. I’ve really worked some at that, you know.”

They swung down into a valley, over a bridge, up the farther slope through a notch, and out along a little plateau with a stream winding through it.

Peter found himself in some danger of forgetting his earnest purpose. He could not resist occasionally glancing sidelong at his companion, and thinking, “She is great in that sweater!” A new, soft magic was stealing in everywhere among what he had regarded as his real thoughts and ideas. Once her elbow brushed his; and little flames rose in his spirit. She walked like a boy. She talked like a boy. She actually seemed to think like a boy.

She quite bewildered him. For she distinctly was not a boy. She was a young woman. She couldn’t possibly be so free from thoughts of self and the drama of life, of man and the all-conquering urge of nature. As a dramatist, as a student of women, he knew better. No; she couldn’t—no more than “friend Betty” back there, philandering along with Hy. The Worm

had guaranteed her innocence—but the Worm notoriously didn't understand women. No; it couldn't be true. For she had broken away from her folks. She did live with the Village set. She did undoubtedly know her Strindberg and Freud. She had taken up public dancing and acting. She did smoke her cigarettes. He felt again the irritation she had, on other occasions, stirred in him. He slowed down, tense with this bewilderment. He drew his hand across his forehead.

Sue went on a little ahead, then stopped, turned, and regarded him with friendly concern.

"Anything the matter?"

"No—oh, no!"

"Perhaps we started too soon after lunch."

She was babying him!

"No—no—I was thinking—"

Almost angrily, he struck out at a swift pace. He would show her who was the weakling in *this* little party! He would make her cry for mercy! But she struck out with him. Swinging along at better than four miles an hour, they followed the road into another valley and for a mile or two along by a bubbling brook.

It was Peter who slackened first. His feet began hurting—an old trouble with his arches. And, despite the tang in the air, he was dripping with sweat. He mopped his forehead and made a desperate effort to breathe easily.

Sue was a thought flushed; there was a shine in her eyes; she smiled happily.

"That's the thing!" she cried. "That's the way I love to move along!"

Apparently she liked him better for walking like that. It really seemed to make a difference. He set his teeth and struck out again, saying, "All right." And sharp little pains shot through his insteps.

"No," said she; "it's best to slow down now for a while. I like to speed up, just now and then. Besides, I've got something on my mind."

He walked in silence, waiting.

"It's about that other talk we had," said she, "down at Jim's. It has bothered me since. I told you your plays were dreadful. You remember?"

He laughed shortly.

"Oh, yes; I remember."

"There," said she, "I did hurt you! I must have been perfectly outrageous."

He made no reply to this—merely mopped

his forehead again and strode along. The pains were shooting above the insteps now.

"I ought to have made myself plainer," said she. "I remember talking as if you couldn't write at all. That was silly. What I really meant was that you didn't write from a point of view that I could accept."

"What you said was," observed Peter, aiming at her sort of good-humored directness, and missing, "'the difficulty is, it's the whole thing—your attitude toward life, your hopeless sentimentality about women, the slushy horrible Broadway falsehood that lies back of everything you do—the Broadway thing, always.' Those were your words."

"Oh, no!" She was serious now. He thought she looked hurt, almost. The thought gave him sudden savage pleasure. "Surely, I didn't say that."

"You did. And you added that my insight into life is just about that of a hardened director of one-reel films."

She was hurt now. She walked on for a little time, quite silent. Finally she stopped short, looked right at him, threw out her hands and said:

"I don't know how to answer you. Probably I did say just about those words—"

"They are exact."

"And, of course, in one sense I meant them. I do feel that way about your work, but not at all in the personal sense that you have taken it. And I recognize your ability as clearly as anybody. Can't you see, man—that's exactly the reason I talked that way to you?" There was feeling in her voice now. "I suppose I had a crazy, kiddish notion of converting you, of making you work for us. You are worth going after." She hesitated and bit her lip. "That's why I was so pleased when Zanin thought he needed you for our big plan, and disappointed now that he can't include you in it—because you could help us and we could, perhaps, help you. Don't forget the other thing I said, that those of us that believe in truth in the theater owe it to our faith to get to work on the men that supply the plays—can't you see, man?"

She threw out her arms again. His eyes, something of the heady spirits that she would, perhaps, have called sex-attraction shining in them now, could see little more than those arms, the slim curves of her body in the sweater and short skirt, her



DRAWN BY GEORGE SIEBER

They lunched, an hour's ride out in northern New Jersey.



at a little motorists' tavern to which Hy guided them

Fortunes in Films

eager, glowing face and fine eyes. And his mind could see no more than his eyes.

An automobile-horn sounded. He caught her arm and hurried her to the roadside. There were more of the large bare trees here, and a rail fence, by which they stood.

"You say Zanin has given up the idea of coming to me with his plan?" He spoke guardedly, thinking that he must not betray the confidences of Betty and Hy.

"Yes; he has had to."

"He spoke to me about it, once."

"Yes; I know. But the man that is going to back him wants to do that part of it himself, or have his own director do it."

Pictures unreeled suddenly before his mind's eye—Sue, in "a pretty primitive costume," exploited at once by the egotistical, self-seeking Zanin, the unscrupulous, masterful Silverstone, a temperamental, commercial director! He shivered.

"Look here," he began—he would fall back on his age and position; he would control this little situation, not drift through it: "I have had a little experience. I've seen these Broadway managers with their coats off. And I've seen what happens to enthusiastic girls that fall into their hands." He hesitated, then plunged on. "Don't you know that Broadway is paved with the skulls of enthusiastic girls? Silverstone? Why, if I were to give you a tenth of Silverstone's history, you would shrink from him—you wouldn't touch the man's ugly hand. Here you are, young, attractive—yes, beautiful, in your own strange way!—full of a real faith in what you call the Truth, on the edge of giving up your youth and your gifts into the hands of a bunch of Broadway crooks. You talk about me and the Broadway thing. Good God! Can't you see that it's girls like you that make the Broadway thing possible? You talk of my sentimentality about women, my 'home-and-mother stuff.' Can't you see that the reason for preaching that home-and-mother stuff, for that sentimentality, is the tens of thousands of girls, like you and unlike you, who wanted to experiment, who thought they could make the world what they wanted it?"

He paused to breathe. Sue was leaning back against the fence, her arms extended along the top rail, looking and looking at him.

"Silverstone!" he snorted, unable to keep silence. "Silverstone! The man's a

crook, I tell you. Nothing that he wants gets away from him. Understand me? Nothing! You people will be children beside him. Zanin is bad enough. He's smart! He doesn't believe in marriage—he doesn't! But Zanin—why Silverstone'll play with him!"

Her eyes were still on him—wide and cold. Now her lips parted, and she drew in a quick breath.

"How on earth," she said, "did you learn all this? Who told you?"

He shut his lips close together. Plainly he had broken; he had gone wild, cleared the traces. Staring at her, at that sweater, he tried to think. She would upbraid Betty. How would he ever square things with Hy?

"Tell me," she said again, with deliberate emphasis, "where you learned these things. Who told you?"

He felt rather than saw the movement of her body within the sweater as she breathed with a slow inhalation. His own breath came quickly. His throat was suddenly dry. He swallowed—once, twice. Then he stepped forward and laid his hand, a trembling hand, on her forearm.

She shook it off and sprang back.

"Don't look at me like that!" his voice said—and rushed on: "Can't you see that I'm pleading for your very life? Can't you see that I *know* what you are headed for—that I want to save you from yourself—that I love you—that I want to take you out of this crazy atmosphere of the Village and give——"

He stopped, partly because he was out of breath, and felt, besides, as if his tonsils had abruptly swollen and filled his throat, partly because she turned deliberately away from him. He stood, uneasily leaning against the fence, while she walked off a little way, very slowly, stood thinking, then came back. She looked rather white now, he thought. And very serious.

"Suppose," she said, "we drop this and finish our walk. It's a good three hours yet over to the other railroad."

"Oh, Sue," he cried, "how can you!"

She stopped him.

"Please!" she said.

"But—but——"

She turned away.

"I simply cannot keep up this personal talk. I would be glad to finish the walk with you, but——"

He pulled himself together.

"But if I won't or can't, you'll have to walk alone," he said, for her.

"Yes; I did mean that."

"Very well," said he.

They walked on, silent, past the woods, up another hillside.

She broke the silence. Gravely she said:

"I will say just one thing more, since you already know so much. Zanin signs up with Silverstone to-morrow morning. Then, within one or two weeks—very soon, certainly—we go down to Cuba or Florida to begin taking the outdoor scenes. That, you see, settles it."

Peter's mind blurred again. Ugly, foggy thoughts rushed over it. He stopped short.

"Good God!" he broke out. "You mean to say—you're going to let those crooks take you off—to Cuba! Don't you see—"

There was no object in saying more. Even Peter could see that. For Sue, after one brief look at his sputtering, distorted face, had turned away and was now walking swiftly on up the hill.

"Wait!" he called. "Sue!"

She reached the top of the hill, passed on over the crest. Gradually she disappeared down the farther slope.

Then Peter, muttering, talking out loud to the road, the fence, the trees, the sky, turned back to retrace the miles they had covered so lightly and rapidly. His feet and legs hurt him cruelly. He found a rough stick, broke it over a rock, and used it for a cane. He thought of joining Hy and Betty. There would be sympathy there, perhaps. Hy could do something.

Where were they, anyway?

Half an hour later he caught a glimpse of them. They were sitting by a boulder on a grassy hillside, some little distance from the road.

Peter hesitated. They were very close together. They hardly seemed to invite interruption. Then, while he stood, dusty and bedraggled, in real pain, watching them, he saw Betty lean back against the boulder—or was it against Hy's arm?

Hy seemed to be leaning over her. His head bent lower still. It quite hid hers from view. He was kissing her!

Blind to the shooting pains in his feet and legs, Peter rushed, stumbling, away. In his profound self-pity, he felt that even Hy had deserted him. He was alone, in a world that had no motive or thought but to do him evil, to crush him!

Somehow he got back to that railroad. An hour and a half he spent painfully sitting in the country station waiting for a train. There was time to think. There was time for nothing but thinking.

And Peter, as so often when deeply stirred either by joy or misery, found himself passing into a violent and soul-wrenching reaction. It was misery, this time. He was a crawling, abject thing. People would laugh. Sue would laugh—

But would she—would she tell? Would Hy and Betty, if they ever did get home, know that she had returned alone?

Those deep-green eyes of hers, the strong little chin—she was Miss Independence herself!

Zanin was signing with Silverstone in the morning!

The train came rumbling in. Peter, in physical and spiritual agony, boarded it.

All these painful, exciting experiences of the day were drawing together toward some new, unexpected result. He was beaten—yet was he beaten? A news-agent walked through the train with a great pile of magazines on his arm.

Peter bought a moving-picture periodical and turned the pages. Then he let it fall to his knees and stared out the window with eyes that saw little.

Zanin—Silverstone—Sue walking alone up over a hill! Peter's little lamp of genius was burning once more. He was thrilled, if frightened, by the ideas that were forming in that curious mind of his.

Shortly after seven o'clock of this same evening, Jacob Zanin reached his mean little room in Fourth Street, after a thrilling twenty-four hours at Silverstone's house at Long Beach and an ineffectual attempt to find Sue in her rooms. Those rooms were dim and silent. No one answered his ring. No one answered his knock when he finally succeeded in following another tenant of the building into the inner hall; for Sue did not arrive until nearly nine. Which explains why he was at his room, alone, at a quarter to eight, when Peter Ericson Mann called there.

Peter, pale, nerves tense, a feverish glow in his eyes behind the big horn glasses, leaned heavily on a walking-stick in the dark hallway, listening to the sound of heavy footsteps creaking across the boards on the other side of the door. Then the door opened, and Zanin, coatless,



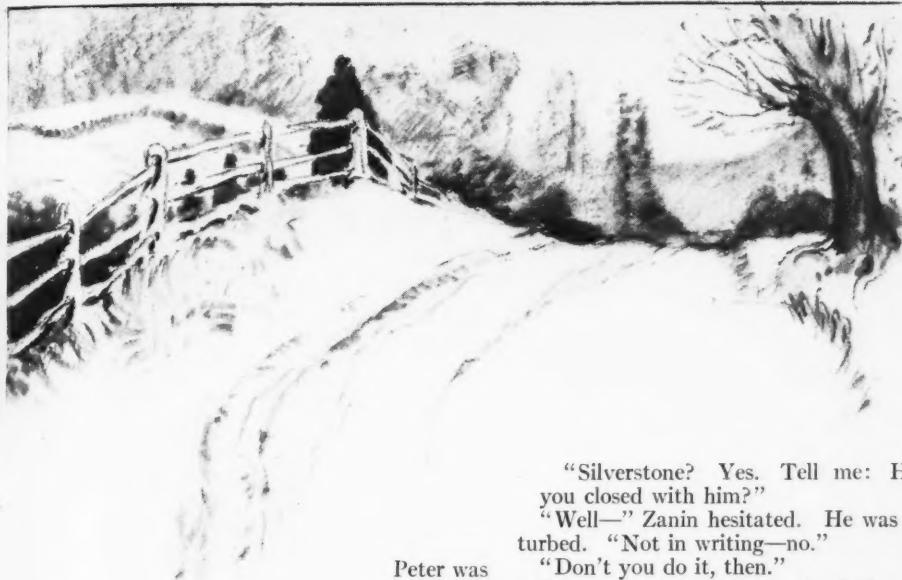
"Don't you know
that Broadway is
paved with the
skulls of enthusi-
astic girls?"

collarless, hair rumpled over his ears, stood there.

"Oh, hello, Mann!" said he. "Come in." Then, observing the stick, "What's the matter?"

"A little arch-trouble. Nothing at all." And Peter limped in.

Peter, as on former occasions, felt the power of the fellow. It was altogether in character that he should exhibit no surprise, though Peter Ericson Mann had never before appeared before him at that door. (He would never know that it was Peter's seventh call within an hour and a half.)



Peter was at his calmest and most effective. He looked casually about at the scant furniture, the soap-boxes heaped with books, the kerosene-stove, symbol of Zanin's martyrdom to his Art.

"Zanin," he said, "you and I had a little talk the other night. Two things have stuck in my mind since. One is the fact that you have got hold of a big idea; and that a man of your caliber wouldn't be giving his time to a proposition that didn't have something vital in it. The other thing is Sue Wilde." Zanin was tipped back in an armless wooden chair, taking Peter in with eyes that were shrewd and cold but not particularly hostile. "I didn't realize at the time what an impression that girl was making on me. But I haven't been able to shake it off. She has something distinctly unusual—call it beauty, charm, personality—I don't know what it is. But she has it."

"Yes," said Zanin; "she has it. But see here, Mann: The whole situation has changed since then—"

"Yes," Peter broke in; "I know."

"You know?"

Peter nodded, offhand.

"Betty Deane has talked to Hy Lowe about it, and Hy has told me."

"You know about—"

"Silverstone? Yes. Tell me: Have you closed with him?"

"Well—" Zanin hesitated. He was disturbed. "Not in writing—no."

"Don't you do it, then."

Zanin tapped on the front of the seat with his large fingers.

"It's regular money, Mann," he said.

"You said you could interest me. Why don't you try?"

"Regular money is regular money."

"Not if you don't get it."

"Why shouldn't I get it?"

"Because Silverstone will. And look what he'll do to your ideas—a conventional commercialist!"

Zanin considered this.

"I've got to risk that—or it looks so. This thing can't possibly be done cheap. I propose to do something really new in a feature-film—new in groupings, new in lighting, new in the simplicity and naturalness of the acting. It will be regarded as a daring theme. It will take regular money. Sue is in just the right frame of mind. A year from now, God knows what she'll be thinking and feeling! She might turn square against our Village life, all of a sudden. I've seen it happen. And now, with everything right, here the money comes to me on a platter. Lord, man, I've got to take it—risk or no risk!"

They were about to come to grips. Peter felt his skin turning cold. His throat went dry again, as in the afternoon.

"How much," he asked, outwardly firmer than he would have dared hope, "how much do you need?"

Zanin stared at him.

Fortunes in Films

"See here," he said: "I've gone pretty far in with Silverstone."

"But you haven't signed."

"No."

Peter laughed shortly.

"Do you think he would consider himself bound by anything you may have said—Silverstone?" This was a point. He could see Zanin thinking it over.

"How much do you need?" he asked again.

"Well——"

"What do you think will happen the minute Sue really discovers the sort of hands she's in? Even if she would want to stick to you!" This was another point.

"Well," said Zanin, thinking fast, "it needn't be lavish, like these big battle-films and such. But it will take money."

"How much money?"

"Three or four thousand. Maybe five or six. It means going South. I want tropical foliage, so my people won't look frozen the way they are dressed. And publicity isn't cheap, you know."

Peter gulped, but plunged on.

"I'll tell you what you do, Zanin. Get another man—a littler director than Silverstone—and have him supply studio, operators, and all the plant necessary, on a partnership basis, you to put in some part of the cash needed."

"Great!" said Zanin. "Fine! And where's the cash to come from?"

"From me."

The front legs of Zanin's chair came to the floor with a bang.

"This is new stuff, Mann!"

"New stuff. I'm not rich, but I believe you've got a big thing here, and I stand willing to put up a few thousand on a private contract with you. This can be just between ourselves. All I ask is a reasonable control of the expenditure."

Zanin thought—and thought. Peter could see the shifting lights in his cold, clear eyes.

"You're on!" he finally said. "If you want to know, I am worried about Silverstone. And I'm certainly in no position to turn down such an offer as this."

Which was the genesis of the Nature Film-Producing Co., Inc., Jacob Zanin, president. They talked late, these new partners.

It was nearly one o'clock in the morning when Peter limped into the rooms.

He found Hy sitting by the window in his pajamas, gazing rapturously at a lacy handkerchief.

"Ah," said Hy, "he comes! Never mind the hour, my boy! I take off my hat. You're better than I am—better than I! More than a *soupçon* of speed, ol' dear!"

Peter dropped limply into the Morris chair.

"What's the matter?" said Hy, observing him more closely. "You look done. Where's Sue?"

Peter composed himself.

"I left Sue a long while ago—hours ago."

"What on earth have you been doing?"

"Exactly what I promised you I'd do."

"I don't get you——"

"You said Sue might not listen to my warning."

"Oh—and she didn't?"

"She did not."

"And you—oh, you said you'd go to Zanin——"

"As man to man, Hy."

"Good Lord, you haven't—Pete, you're limping! You didn't fight?"

Peter solemnly shook his head.

"It wasn't necessary, Hy," he said, huskily, then cleared his throat. What was the matter with his throat to-day, anyway. He sank back in his chair. His eyes closed.

Hy leaned forward with some anxiety.

"Pete, what's the matter? You're white!"

Peter's head moved slowly.

"Nothing's the matter." He slowly opened his eyes. "It's been a hard day, Hy, but the job is done."

"The job?"

"I have saved her, Hy."

"But the pictures?"

"They will be taken under my direction."

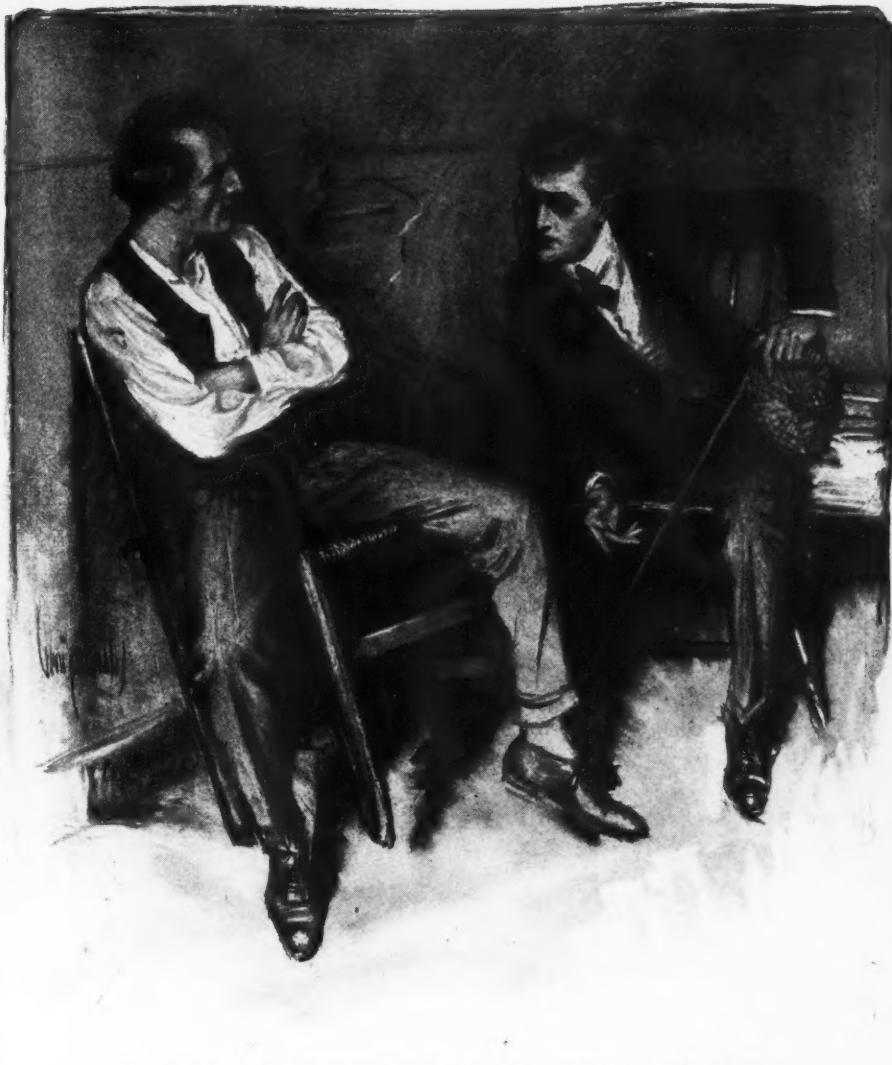
"And Silverstone?"

"Silverstone is out. I control the company."

He closed his eyes again, and breathed slowly and evenly in a deliberate effort to calm his tumultuous nerves.

"Well!" said Hy, big-eyed. "Well!"

"Something to drink, Hy," Peter murmured. "I put it over, Hy; I put it over!" He said this with a little more vigor, trying to talk down certain sudden misgivings regarding six thin little books with pasteboard covers that lay, at the moment, in the middle drawer of the desk, next the



Zanin was tipped back in an armless chair, taking Peter in with eyes that were shrewd and cold but not particularly hostile

wall. He was wondering how long those books would last.

Hy got slowly to his feet, stood rubbing his head and staring down in complete admiration at the apparently triumphant if unmistakably exhausted Peter.

"It's a queer time for cocktails," Hy remarked, solemn himself now. "But, in this case, cocktails are certainly indicated."

He picked up the telephone.

"John," he said to the night man below, "some ice!"

Then he shuffled to the closet, struck a match, and found the shaker.

In the amber fluid they pledged the success of The Nature Film-Producing Co., Inc., these Seventh-Story Men, dwelling, the while, each in his own thoughts, on the essential nobility of sacrificing oneself to save another.

His Rooms, the next episode of **The Trufflers**, will appear in the February issue.

The Life of CHARLES



W. W. Randall, Charles Frohman's first business partner

EDITOR'S NOTE—
In this instalment of his biography, we find Charles Frohman launched as an independent manager, and working some notable reforms in the conduct of theatrical business as he begins to direct the fortunes of many stage celebrities of the day.

Booking Agent and Broadway Producer

CHARLES FROHMAN was now launched as independent manager. He had cut his managerial teeth on three productions, which, while not financially successful, had impressed his ability. People began to talk

OFFICES OF
RANDALLS THEATRICAL BUREAU
REPRESENTING THE LEADING THEATRE MANAGERS OF THE
UNITED STATES AND CANADA

CABLE ADDRESS
"Randall" N. Y.

1257 BROADWAY, May 1st, 1888.

Dear Sir: Our lease of the offices occupied by us at 1257 BROADWAY, where we will be taken new and much more commodious quarters, at 1267 BROADWAY, where we will be permanently located from and after this date.

Our agency, we are pleased to state, has been an established success from the very start. We now represent every important theatre in the United States and Canada, and an increasing number of our theatres, and we will always keep up the high standard of attractions that have been booked through this office and another, will have adjoining offices with us and his attractions well known managers and agents. We transfer a general office with us and his attractions will be booked through our office. We transfer and let in competition with no other, excepting that pertaining to a dramatic or actor's agency. Neither do we have any desk-room to let, reserving all the space of our offices for our own use.

All of which is respectfully submitted to managers and agents.

Yours very truly,

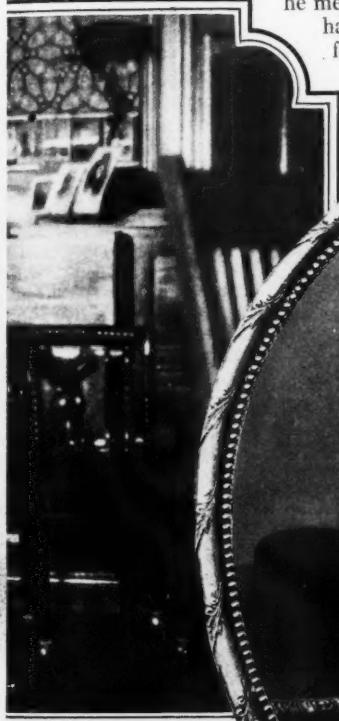
Charles Frohman
M. H. Randall
MANAGERS.

about
the nervy,
energetic young
man who could go
from failure to failure
with a smile on his face. It
is a tradition in theatrical

The Randalls' Theatrical Bureau is a valuable organization.
Agents and managers are welcome to call on us for information.
Address to the Managers, 1257 Broadway, New York City.
Daly's Theatre, April 4, 1888.

FROHMAN

*by Daniel Frohman
and Isaac F. Marcooson*



Frohman in Daly's Theatre where he and his partner, opened the modern system of tractions, and conducted a general They were compelled to seek other Augustin Daly objected to their using Building" on their letter-heads

he met a handsome young English actor named E. H. Sothern, who had come to this country with his sister and who had appeared for a short time with John McCullough, the tragedian. Sothern was in New York looking for an engagement.

In those days, actors usually secured engagements by running down rumors of productions that were afloat on the "Rialto." In this way,

Sothern heard that Charles Frohman was about to send out an English play called "Nita's First," which had been produced at Wallack's Theatre. Sothern called on Frohman.

"What salary do you want?" asked Frohman.

Sothern said he wanted fifty dollars.

"All right," said Frohman; "the part is worth seventy-five, and I'll pay it."

Twenty years later, Charles Frohman paid this

Augustin Daly



management that successful starts almost invariably mean disastrous finishes. An auspicious beginning usually leads to extravagance and lack of balance. Failure at the outset provokes caution. Charles Frohman, therefore, had had enough hard, early jolts to make him careful.

He always admired big names. Thus it came about that his next venture was associated with a name and a prestige that meant much and, later on, cost much. Just about that time



Daly's Theatre Building, 1215 Broadway, New York, where Charles Frohman's first business office was located

The Life of Charles Frohman

same actor a salary of one hundred thousand dollars for a season of forty weeks in Shakespearean roles.

"Nita's First," however, ran for only two weeks on the road, and Charles Frohman ended the engagement. The reason was that he had conceived what he considered a brilliant idea.

Lester Wallack and the Wallack Theatre Company almost dominated the New York dramatic situation. The company, headed by Wallack himself, included Rose Coghlan, Osmond Tearle, John Gilbert, and a whole galaxy of brilliant people. The Wallack Theatre plays were the talk of the town. Frohman had an inspiration which he communicated, one day, to Wallack's son Arthur, whom he knew. To him, he said:

"What do you think about my taking the Wallack successes out on the road? It is a shame not to capitalize the popular interest in them while it is hot. Look at what the Madison Square Theatre has been doing! Will you speak to your father about it?"

ASSOCIATION WITH WALLACK

Arthur spoke to his father, who was not averse to the idea, and Charles was bidden to the great presence. He had met Lester Wallack before, when he tried to engage Osmond Tearle. Now came the real meeting. After Frohman had stated his case with all his persuasion, he added:

"I am sure I can make you rich. You have overlooked a great chance to make money."

Lester Wallack said,

"It is a good idea, Mr. Frohman, but your company must reflect credit upon the theatre and your leading woman must be of the same type as my leading woman, Rose Coghlan."

Charles immediately said,

"The company shall be worthy of you and the name it bears."

Lester Wallack agreed to rehearse the company and to permit his name to be used in connection with it. After Charles Frohman left, Wallack said to his son:

"Watch that young man, Arthur. He is going to make his mark."

Arthur Wallack was about to take a trip to England, and Charles commissioned him to engage the leading people. He therefore engaged Sophie Eyre, who had been leading woman at the Drury Lane Theatre, and W. H. Denny.

Charles Frohman himself selected the remaining members of the company, who were Newton Gotthold, C. B. Wells, Charles Wheatleigh, Max Freeman, Rowland Buckstone, Henry Talbot, Sam De Bois, George Clarke, Fred Corbett, Louise Dillon (who had been with him in the precarious Stoddart Comedy Company days), Kate Denin Wilson, Agnes Elliott, and Gracie Wilson.

When Charles Frohman engaged Wallack's Theatre Company he had no office. He was then living at the Coleman House, on Broadway, at Twenty-eighth Street. Most of the engagements were made as he sat in a big leather chair in the lobby, with one foot thrown over the arm of it.

The principal capital that Charles Frohman had for this venture was five thousand dollars put up by Daniel J. Bernstein, who became treasurer of the company. Alf Hayman, who succeeded to the management of all the Frohman interests when his little chief went down on the Lusitania, was engaged as advance agent.

It would have been a courageous undertaking for a seasoned and well-financed theatrical veteran. Although Lester Wallack was widely known, his theatre and its successes were not familiar to the great mass of people outside New York. In those days, theatrical publicity was not so widespread as now. No wonder, then, that the daring of a young manager of twenty-five in taking out a company whose salary-list was nearly thirteen hundred dollars was commented on.

THE WALLACK THEATRE COMPANY

Charles called his aggregation the Wallack Theatre Company. The repertoire consisted mainly of "Victor Durand," a play by Henry Guy Carleton, which had been produced at Wallack's on December 13, 1884. Subsequently, the company also played "Moths," "Lady Clare," "Diplomacy," and Belasco's "La Belle Russe."

This tour, which was to write itself indelibly on the career of Charles Frohman, began in Chicago and was continued through the South to New Orleans, where a stay of six weeks was made at the St. Charles Theatre. Belasco joined them here for a week to put on "The World," which had been produced at Wallack's a short time before.

In New Orleans occurred one of those contacts in Charles Frohman's life that led

to close and lifelong friendship. Two years before, while playing a Madison Square company at one of the theatres in St. Louis, he met a bright young man in the box-office named Augustus Thomas. He had been a newspaper man, and was beginning to write plays. He told Charles then that he had just made a short play out of Frances Hodgson Burnett's story, "Editha's Burglar."

In New Orleans,



FROM
RESERVE
COLLECTION



The Life of Charles Frohman

followed the new route. A series of tragic, dramatic, and comical experiences now began. The tour was through the heart of the old cow-country. One night, when the train was stalled by the wrecking of a bridge near Miles City, Montana, a group of cowboys started in to "shoot up" the train. Frohman singled out the leader and said,

"We've got a theatrical company here, and we will give you a performance."

He got Rowland Buckstone to stand out on the prairie and recite "The Smuggler's Life," "The Execution," and "The Sanguinary Pirate" by the light of a big bonfire which was built while the show was going on. This tickled the cowboys and brought salvos of shots and shouts of laughter.

At Miles City occurred what might have been a serious episode. When the company reached the hotel, at about eleven in the morning, Charles Wheatleigh (the "first old man") asked the hotel-keeper what time breakfast was served. When he replied, "Half-past eight," Wheatleigh pounded the desk and said:

"That is for farmers. When do artists eat?"

The clerk was a typical Westerner and thought this was an insult. He made a lunge for Wheatleigh, when Frohman stepped in and settled the difficulty in his usual suave and smiling way.

READY RESOURCE

At Butte came a characteristic example of Charles Frohman's enterprise and resource. It was necessary at all hazards to get an audience. When Charles got there, he found that the wife of the leading gambler had died. He expressed so much sympathy for the bereaved man that he was made a pall-bearer, and this act created such an impression on the townspeople that they flocked to the theatre at night.

At Missoula, Montana, Charles went out ahead of the show for a week. Approaching the treasurer at the box-office, he said,

"Will you please let me have a hundred dollars on account of the show?"

"I can't," replied the man. "We haven't sold a single seat for any of your performances."

Frohman thought a moment and walked out of the lobby. All afternoon orders for seats began to come into the box-office. Late in the afternoon, when Frohman got back, the agent smiled and said:

"Mr. Frohman, I can let you have that hundred dollars now. We are beginning to have quite an advance sale."

Frohman had gone down-town and sent in the orders for the seats himself. He used fictitious names.

Now began a summer of hardships. With the utmost difficulty, the company got to Portland, Oregon, where Charles established a sort of headquarters. From this point he sent the company on short tours. But business continued bad.

HARD TIMES

He started a series of farewell performances, as he did in Texas, and placarded the city with the bills announcing "positively closing performances." These bills were typical of the publicity talents of Charles Frohman. He headed them "Good bye Engagements," and added the words, "A Long, Lingering Farewell." Under the title, "Favorites' Farewell," he printed the names of the members of the company with the titles or parts in which they were known. "Good bye, Louise Dillon, Our Esmeralda"; "Good bye, Kate Denin Wilson, Pretty Lady Dolly"; "Good bye, Charles B. Wells, Faithful Dave Hardy"; "Good bye, Rowland Buckstone, 'Some Other Man,'" were typical illustrations of his attempt to make a strong appeal for business.

Actual money in the company was a novelty. Bernstein's five thousand dollars had long since vanished. When a member of the company wanted some cash, it had to be extracted from the treasurer in one-dollar instalments.

Despite the hardships, the utmost good humor and feeling prevailed. Most of the members of the company were young; there was no bickering. They knew that Frohman was struggling with and for them. They called him "the governor," and he always referred to them as his "nice little company." All looked forward confidently to better days, and, in this belief, they were supported and inspired by the cheery philosophy of the little manager.

Charles's resource was tested daily. He had booked a near-by town for "fair week," which always meant good business. At last he had money in sight. The local manager, however, insisted upon a great display of fancy printing. Charles was in a dilemma, because he owed his printer a big bill, and



Photograph of six members of the Wallack
Theatre Company, taken in Salem, Oregon,
1885, and sent to the manager, Charles Frohman, with the inscription:
"From your nice little company, waiting for its salary".

he had no more lithograph-paper on hand. A friend who was in advance of William Gillette's play, "The Private Secretary," came along with a lot of his own paper. Charles borrowed a quantity of it and also from the "Whose Baby Are You?" company, covered

over these two titles with slips containing the words "Lady Clare" (the play he was going to present), and billed the town with great success.

During the Portland sojourn, Charles Frohman sent the company on to Salem, Oregon. While there, six members had their photographs taken with a disconsolate look on their faces and with Buckstone holding a dollar in his hand. They sent the picture to C. F. with the inscription:

"From your nice little company, waiting for its salary."

At Portland, Oregon, A. D. Charlton, who was passenger agent of the Northern Pacific, and who had

The Wallack
Salem, Ore.
manager.
inscript-
com-

Positively only engagement prior to their departure for New York.

Under the management of CHARLES FROHMAN.

FAVORITES' FAREWELL.

Positively the Last Engagement in

the along
paper. Charles bor-
and also from the

gon, A. D. Charlton,
who was passenger-
agent of the North-
ern Pacific,
and who had

been
o f
g r e a t
service to
Charles in
extricating
him from
various finan-
cial difficulties,
said to him one
day,

"Frohman, I

NY.
New York.
**ALDA
LEY
LAW
FIRM**
Charles in
extricating
him from
various financial
difficulties,
said to him one
day, "Frohman, I
want you to meet a

The Life of Charles Frohman

very promising little actress who is out here with her mother."

Frohman said he would be glad, and, accompanying Charlton to his office, was introduced to Annie Adams, a well-known actress from Salt Lake City, and her wistful-eyed little daughter, Maude. They were both members of the John McGuire Company. This was Charles Frohman's first meeting with Maude Adams.

At Portland, Frohman added "The Two Orphans" and "Esmeralda" to the company's repertoire. But it barely got them out of town at the really and truly "farewell."

Now began a return journey from Portland that was even more precarious than the trip out. Baggage had to be sacrificed; there was scarcely any scenery. One backdrop, showing the interior of a cathedral, was used for every kind of scene, from a gambling-house to a ballroom. To the financial hardship of the homeward trip was added real physical trial. Frohman showed in towns wherever there was the least prospect of any kind of house. The company therefore played in skating-rinks, school-houses, even barns. In some places, the members of the company had to take the oil-lamps that served as footlights back in the makeshift dressing-rooms while they dressed.

INCIDENTS OF THE TOUR

At Bozeman, Montana, occurred an incident which showed both the humor and the precariousness of the situation. Frohman assembled the company in the waiting-room of the station, and stepping up to the ticket-office, laid down one hundred and thirty dollars in cash.

"Where do you want to go?" asked the agent.

Shoving the money at him, Frohman said, "How far will this take us?"

The agent looked out of the window, counted up the company, and said, "To Billings."

Turning to the company, Frohman said, with a smile,

"Ladies and gentlemen, we play Billings next."

Just then he received a telegram from Alf Hayman, who was on ahead.

What town shall I bill?

Frohman wired back,

Bill Billings.

Hayman again wired:

Have no printing and can get no credit. What shall I do?

Frohman's resource came into stead, for he telegraphed:

Notify theatres that we are a high-class company from Wallack's Theatre in New York and use no ordinary printing. We employ only newspapers and dodgers.

At Missoula, Montana, on their way back, a member of the company became dissatisfied and stood with his associates at the station where two trains met, one for the east and one for the west. As the train for the east slowed up, the actor rushed toward it, and, calling to the members of the company, said:

"I am leaving you for good. You'll never get anywhere with Frohman."

The company, however, elected to stay with Frohman. In later years, this actor fell into hardship. Frohman singled him out, and, from that time on until Frohman's death, he had a good engagement every year.

At Bismarck, North Dakota, the company gave "Moths." In this play the spurned hero, a singer, has a line which reads, "There are many marquises but very few tenors!"

Money had been so scarce for months that this remark was the last straw, so the company burst into laughter and the show was nearly broken up.

A DISCONSOLATE RETURN

Through all these hardships, Frohman remained serene and smiling. His unfailing good humor tided over the dark days. The end came at Winona, Minnesota. The company had sacrificed everything it could possibly sacrifice. Frohman borrowed considerable money from the railroad-agent to go to Chicago, where he borrowed six hundred dollars from Frank Sanger. With this, the company reached New York.

Even the last lap of this disastrous journey was not without its humor. The men were all assembled in the smoking-car on the way from Albany to New York. Frohman, for once, sat silent. When somebody asked him why he looked so glum, he said,

"I'm thinking of what I have got to face to-morrow."

Up spoke Wheatleigh, whose marital



(Right) E. H. Sothern, when Charles Frohman paid him a salary of seventy-five dollars a week. (Left) Washington Irving Bishop, the remarkable mind-reader whom Frohman brought to America in 1887



troubles were well known. He slapped Frohman on the back and said:

"Charley, your troubles are slight. Think of me—I've got to face my wife tomorrow."

It was characteristic of Frohman's high sense of integrity that he gave his personal note to every member of the company for back salary in full, and before five years passed, had discharged every debt.

Charles Frohman turned up in New York with less than a dollar in his pocket, with his clothes worn, and looking much the worse for wear. On the street he met David Belasco. They pooled their finances and went to "Beefsteak John's," where they had a supper of kidney stew, pie, and tea.

The next day, Frohman was standing speculatively in front of the Coleman House when he met Jack Rickaby, a noted theatrical figure of the time. Rickaby slapped the young man on the back and said:

"Frohman, I am glad you have had a good season. You're going

to be a big man in this profession." He shook his hand warmly and walked away.

It was the first cheering word that Frohman had had.

The news of his disastrous trip had not become known. Always proud, he was glad of it. After Rickaby had shaken his hand, he felt something in it, and looking down he saw that the big-hearted manager had left a hundred-dollar bill there. He had known all along the story of the Wallack-tour hardships, and it was his way of expressing sympathy. Frohman afterward said it was the most touching moment in his life.

It was late in 1885 when Charles Frohman returned from the disastrous Wallack's Theatre tour, bankrupt in finance but almost over-capitalized in courage and plans



Mrs. Annie Adams, mother of Maude Adams

The Life of Charles Frohman

for the future. Up to that time, he had no office of his own. Like many of the managers of the day, his office was in his hat. Now, he set up an establishment. It required no capital to embark in the booking business in those days. Nerve and resiliency were the two principal requisites.

THE START AS BOOKING AGENT

The first Frohman offices were at 1215 Broadway in the same building that housed Daly's Theatre. In two small rooms on the second floor, Charles Frohman laid the corner-stone of what, in later years, became a chain of offices and interests that reached wherever the English language was spoken on the stage. The interesting contrast here was that, while Augustin Daly, then in the heyday of his great success, was creating theatrical history on the stage below him, Charles Frohman laid the foundation of his managerial career up-stairs.

Frohman's first associate was W. W. Randall, a San Francisco newspaper man, whom he had met in the Haverly Minstrel days and who had been manager of "The Private Secretary" and several of the Madison Square companies on the road. He was alert and aggressive, and knew the technique of the theatrical business. Charles Frohman was always pretentious, so he set up two distinct forms. One was "Randall's Theatrical Bureau, Charles Frohman and W. W. Randall, Managers," which was under Randall's direction and which booked attractions for theaters throughout the country on a fee basis. The other was called "Frohman & Randall, General Theatrical Managers." Its function was to produce plays and was directly under Charles's supervision. The two firm-names were emblazoned on the door, and business was started.

These offices have an historic interest aside from the fact that they were the first to be occupied by Charles Frohman. Out of them grew really the whole modern system of booking attractions. Up to that time, theatrical booking was different from the present time, when there are great centralized agencies that book attractions for strings of theaters and that cover the entire country. Union Square was the "Rialto" and the heart and center of the booking business. The out-of-town manager came here to fill his time for the season. Much of the booking was done in a haphazard

way on the sidewalk, and whole seasons were booked on the curb and in pocket note-books. There had been two methods of booking: one by the manager of a company, who wrote to the towns for time; the other through an agent located in New York. It was this latter system that Frohman and Randall now began to develop in a scientific fashion. Charles's extensive experience on the road and his knowledge of the theatrical values of the different towns made him a valuable agent.

Frohman & Randall at that time practically had the field to themselves, because Brooks & Dickson, who included the well-known Joseph Brooks of our time, and who had conducted the first booking-office of any consequence, had withdrawn from the business. H. S. Taylor had just established "Taylor's Theatrical Exchange," destined to figure in theatrical history as the forerunner of the Klaw & Erlanger business, on Fourteenth Street.

HUMOR AMID HARDSHIPS

Despite the high-sounding titles on the door, the Frohman offices were unpretentious. Frohman and Randall had a desk apiece, and there was a second-hand iron safe in the corner. When some one asked Frohman, one day, what the safe was used for, he replied, with his characteristic humor,

"We keep the coal-scuttle in it."

As a matter of fact, there was more truth than poetry in this remark, because the office assets were so low that during the winter the firm had to burn gas all day to keep warm. When asked the reason for this, Frohman said jocularly:

"We can get more credit if we use gas, because the gas-bill has to be paid only once a month. Coal is cash."

Indeed, the office was so cold during that season that it came to be known in the profession as the "Cave of the Winds."

It was during those early precarious days when Frohman, still saddled with the debts of the Wallack's tour, had one of the most amusing incidents of his life. One morning he was served with the notice of a supplementary proceeding which had been instituted against him. He was always afraid of the courts, and he was much alarmed. He rushed across the street to the Gilsey House and consulted Henry Dixey, the actor, who was living there. Dixey's advice

was to get a lawyer. Together they returned to the Daly's Theatre Building where, Frohman knew, a lawyer was installed on the top floor. They found the lawyer blacking that portion of his white socks that appeared through the holes in his shoes.

Frohman stated his case, which the lawyer accepted and then demanded a two-dollar fee. Frohman only had one dollar in his pocket and borrowed the other dollar from Dixey.

"This money," said the lawyer, "is to be paid into the court. How about my fee?"

Frohman fumbled in his pocket and produced a ten-cent piece. He handed it to the lawyer, saying:

"I will pay you later on. Here is your car-fare. Be sure to get in court before it opens."

Frohman and Dixey left. Frohman was much agitated.

They walked around the block several times. When he heard the clock strike ten, he said to Dixey,

"Now the lawyer is at the court-room and the matter is being settled." In his relief he said: "I have credit at Browne's chop-house. Let us go over and have breakfast."



PROCTOR'S THEATRE
23rd STREET

PROGRAMME.

PROCTOR & TURNER.
Week Ending March 9th, 1889.
Matines at 2 o'clock.
Every Evening at 8.15 o'clock.

Matinee SATURDAYS.

ENGAGEMENT OF THE EXCELENT COMPANY.

NEIL BURGESS,
AND A SPECIALLY SELECTED COMPANY.
UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF
DAVID TOWERS.

"THE COUNTY FAIR"

A Picture of New England Life by
CHARLES BARNARD.

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Otis Tucker	Archie Boyd
Tim, the Tanner	Julia Scott
Nathan Hammerhead	Hal Clegg
Bill Bartlett	Will Ferguson
Bill Parker	Alie Phillips
Constance	Oscar Stevens
George Joe	Bernard Meyers
Candy Molasses	By Hall
Tags	Clara Throp
Sally Grossaway	Adie Phillips
Mollie Wilkins	Edith Wilson
Alugil Price	Neil Burgess

principals and principals

Neil Burgess, in "The County Fair." Charles Frohman let a great opportunity go by when he refused to undertake the management of this play on account of a prejudice against Burgess

At the restaurant they ordered a modest meal.

As Frohman looked up from his table, he saw a man sitting directly opposite whose face was hidden behind a newspaper. In front of him was a pile of wheat cakes.

"Gee whiz," said Frohman, "I wish I had enough money to buy a stack of wheat cakes that high!"

The Life of Charles Frohman

As he said this to Dixey, the man opposite happened to lower his paper and revealed himself to be the lawyer Frohman had just engaged. He was having a breakfast-spree himself with the two dollars extracted from his client.

Business began to pick up with the new year. The first, and what afterward proved to be the most profitable, clients of the office were the Baldwin and California Theatres, in San Francisco, which were dominated by Al Hayman, brother of Alf, and who now came intimately into Charles Frohman's life and remained so until his death. He was a Philadelphian who had conducted various traveling theatrical enterprises in San Francisco and who had met Frohman for the first time in London when he went over with the Haverly Mastodons. Hayman admired Frohman much, and soon after made him general Eastern representative of all the Hayman Coast interests.

Hayman was developing into a magnate of importance. With his assistance, Charles was able to book a company in towns all the way from New York to San Francisco. Charles made himself responsible for the time between New York and Kansas City, while Hayman would guarantee the company's time from Kansas City or Omaha to the Coast.

Frohman and Randall made a good team, and they soon acquired a chain of more than three hundred theaters, ranging from music-halls in small towns that booked the ten-twenty-thirty-cent dramas up to the palatial houses like Hooley's, in Chicago, and the Hollis, in Boston.

It was a happy-go-lucky time. Money came and went easily. If Frohman had ten dollars to spare in his pocket, he considered himself rich.

A PLUNGE IN PRODUCTIONS

While the booking business waxed in volume, the production-end of the establishment did not fare so well. Charles, had this end of the office under his particular dominion, and, with the instinct of the plunger, now began to put on plays right and left. Just before the association with Randall, Frohman had become manager of Neil Burgess, a well-known actor of the time, and had booked him for a tour in a play called "Vim." A disagreement followed, and Frohman turned him over to George W. Lederer, who took the play out to the Coast.

A year after this episode came the first of the many opportunities for fortune that Charles Frohman turned down in the course of his eventful life.

Burgess, who was quite an inventive person, had patented the treadmill mechanism for horse-racing on the stage, and which was afterward used with such great effect in "Ben Hur." He was so much impressed with this device that he had a play written around it called "The County Fair."

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

Burgess, who liked Frohman immensely, tried to get him to take charge of this piece, but Frohman would not listen to the proposition about the mechanical device. He was sore over his experience with "Vim," and whenever Burgess tried to talk "The County Fair" and its machine to him, he would put him off.

Burgess finally went elsewhere, and, as most people know, "The County Fair" almost rivaled "The Old Homestead" in money-making facility. The horse-racing scene became the most talked-of episode on the stage at the time, and Burgess cleared more than a quarter of a million dollars from the enterprise. Charles Frohman afterward admitted that his prejudice against Burgess and his machine had cost his office at least one hundred thousand dollars.

Frohman & Randall now launched an important venture. McKee Rankin, who was one of the best known actors of the time, induced them to become his manager in a piece called "The Golden Giant," by Clay M. Greene. Charles, however, agreed to the proposition on the condition that Rankin would put his wife, Kitty Blanchard, in the cast. They had been estranged, and Frohman, with his natural shrewdness, believed that the stage reunion of Mr. and Mrs. McKee Rankin would be a great drawing card for the play. Rankin made the arrangements, and the Fifth Avenue Theater was booked for two weeks, commencing Easter Monday, 1886.

The theater was then under the management of John Stetson, of Boston, and Charles Frohman and Rankin looked forward to doing a great business. In this cast, Robert Hilliard, who had been a clever amateur actor in Brooklyn, made his first professional appearance. Charles supervised the rehearsals and had rosy visions of a

CHARLES FROHMAN

WILLIAM W. RANDALL

OFFICES OF

**FROHMAN & RANDALL,
General Theatrical Managers.**

1215 BROADWAY.

DALY'S
THEATRE BUILDING

New York City, May 12, 1887.

Charles Frohman Esq.

Dear Sir.

I hereby agree to pay you individually forty per cent. of whatever losses may have occurred in the production of "The Golden Giant" up to date, under your arrangement.

A. McKee Rankin

Agreement of McKee Rankin to pay losses incurred in the production of Randall lost five thousand dollars, but

big success. At four o'clock, however, on the afternoon of the opening night, Charles went to the box-office and discovered that the advance sale had been only one hundred dollars.

"I tell you what to do, Randall," quickly thought out Frohman.

"If Stetson will stand for it, we will paper the house to the doors. We must open to a capacity audience."

When Frohman put it up to Stetson, he said he did not believe in "second-hand reconciliations," but assented to the plan. Frohman gave Randall six hundred good seats and distributed them to the proper hands, and the *première* of "The Golden Giant," to all intents and purposes, took place to a crowded and paying house. In reality, there was exactly two hundred and eighty-eight dollars in the box-office. Business picked up, however, and the two weeks' engagement proved prosperous. The play failed on the road, however, and the Frohman offices lost

Charles Frohman forty per cent. of any "The Golden Giant." Frohman & Rankin did not keep to his agreement

over five thousand dollars on the venture. Rankin had agreed to pay Frohman forty per cent. of the losses. That agreement remained in force all his life, for it was never paid.

In Charles Frohman's next venture, he launched his first star.

Curiously enough, he was Tony Hart, a member of the famous Irish team of

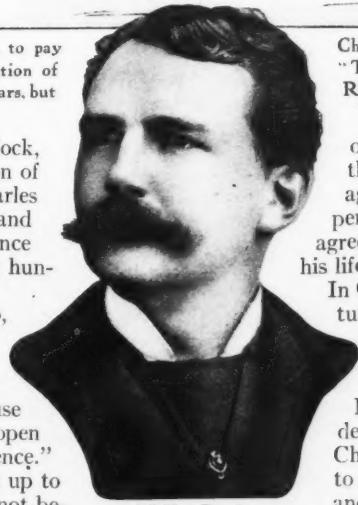
Harrigan and Hart, which had delighted the boyhood of Charles Frohman when he used to slip away on Saturday nights and revel in a show.

Tony Hart had separated from Harrigan some years before, and, in some way, Charles obtained the manuscript of a farce-comedy, by William Gill, called "A Toy Pistol."

He had always admired Hart, and when he saw that the leading character had to impersonate an Italian, a young Hebrew, an Irishwoman, and a Chinaman, he said,

"Tony Hart is the very person."

Accordingly he engaged Hart and a company which included J. B. Mackey,



McKee Rankin

F. R. Jackson, T. J. Cronin, D. G. Longworth, Annie Adams, Annie Alliston, Mattie Ferguson, Bertie Amberg, Eva Grenville, Vera Wilson, and Minnie Williams.

FROHMAN'S FIRST STAR

This production had an influence on Charles Frohman's life far greater than the association with his first star. Annie Adams, who now began a more or less continuous connection with Charles Frohman's companies, was the mother of Maude Adams, who was about to make her first New York appearance in "The Paymaster," with a traveling company. Already the energetic mother was importuning Charles to engage the daughter. His answer was, "I'll give her a chance as soon as I can." He little dreamed that this wisp of a girl was to become, in later years, his most profitable and best known star.

Charles was keenly interested in "A Toy Pistol." He conducted the rehearsals, and, on February 20, 1886, produced it at what was then called the New York Comedy Theatre. This was originally a large billiard-hall in the Gilsey Building, on Broadway between Twenty-eighth and Twenty-ninth Streets, and had been first called the San Francisco Minstrel Hall. It became successively Haverly's Comedy Theatre, the New York Comedy Theatre, and at the time of the production of "A Toy Pistol," which ran only a few weeks, was known as the New York Comedy Theatre. Subsequently it became known as Hermann's Theatre and was the scene of many of the earlier Charles Frohman productions.

Charles Frohman now became immersed in productions. About this time, Archibald Clavering Gunter, who had scored a sensational success with his books, especially "Mr. Barnes of New York," had written a play called "A Wall Street Bandit," which had been produced with great success in San Francisco. Frohman booked it for four weeks at the old Standard Theatre (afterward the Manhattan) on a very generous royalty basis, and plunged, in his usual lavish style, to do something brilliant. He got together a magnificent cast, which included Georgia Cayvan, W. J. Ferguson, Robert McWade, Charles Bowser, Charles Wheatleigh, and Sadie Bigelow. The play opened to capacity, and the indications were that the engagement would be a success; but it suddenly fizzled out. On Sunday

morning, when Charles read the papers with their reviews of the week, he said to Randall, with his usual philosophy,

"We've got a magnificent frost, but it was worth doing."

This production cost the youthful manager ten thousand dollars.

Frohman still had control of time at the Standard, so he now put on a play translated by Henri Rochefort, called "A Daughter of Ireland," in which Georgia Cayvan had the title-rôle. Here he scored another failure, but his ardor remained undampened, and he went on to what looked to be the biggest thing he had yet tried.

MANAGER OF BOUCICAULT

Dion Boucicault was one of the great stage figures of his period. He was both actor and author, and wrote or adapted several hundred plays, including such phenomenal successes as "Colleen Bawn," "The Shaughraun," which ran for a year simultaneously in London, New York, and Melbourne, and "London Assurance." There was much talk of his latest comedy, "The Jilt." Frohman, who always wanted to be associated with big names, now arranged by cable to produce this play at the Standard. Once more he plunged on an expensive company, which included, among others, Fritz Williams, Louise Thorndyke, and Helen Bancroft.

For four weeks he cleared a thousand a week. Then he put the company on the road, where it did absolutely nothing. Charles Frohman, who had an uncanny sense of analysis of play-failures, now declared that the reason for the failure was that theatergoers resented Boucicault's treatment of his first wife, Agnes Robertson. Boucicault had declared that he was not the father of her child, and when she sued him in England, the courts gave her the verdict. Meanwhile Boucicault married, and in the eyes of the world he was a bigamist. This experience, it is interesting to add, taught Charles Frohman never to engage stars on whom there was the slightest smirch of scandal or disrepute.

At Montreal, Boucicault refused to continue the tour, and this engagement, like so many of its predecessors, left Charles in a financial hole. Despite all these reverses, he was able to make a livelihood out of the booking-end of the office, which thrived and grew with each month.

Frohman, by this time, was an established producer, and although the tide of fortune had not gone altogether happily with him, he had a Micawber-like conviction that the big thing would eventually turn up. Now came his first contact with Bronson Howard, who, a few years later, was to be the first milestone in his journey to fame and fortune.

Howard's name was one to conjure with. He had produced

FROM
RESERVE
COLLECTION



Agnes Robertson, first wife of
Dion Boucicault

"Young Mrs. Winthrop," "The Banker's Daughter," "Saratoga," and other great successes. Charles Frohman, yielding as usual to the lure of big names, now put on Howard's play, "Baron Rudolph," which George Knight had paid the author three thousand dollars to rewrite. Knight gave Frohman a free hand in the matter of casting the production, and it was put on at the Fourteenth Street Theatre in an elaborate fashion. The company included various people who later on were



Dion Boucicault. His treatment of his first wife, Agnes Robertson, was, Frohman declared, responsible for the failure of "The Jilt" in America.

3 week		3 week	
Boston - New Bedford		Brockton - Waltham	
R R J to Boston	100	Carriage	17 45
Stamps Boston	100	R R to Brockton	2 50
Telegpn. Boston	25	Carriage to Waltham	1 00
1 00	25	R R to Boston	6 00
1 00	40	" to Waltham	1 7
To Klaw	40	Car fare	1 0
Town to N.B.	100	R R to Boston	17
Express in stage	180	Carriage	30
Hack Boston	100	Indigo & Waltham	35
Pantlakel Full Moon	100	2 p.m. in pony	50
Express news paper	100	Car fare	35
British & Amer.	300	Delight & Scars	30
Town to Full Moon	60	Train to Chelsea	30
Express	100	Tickets	10
Holiday Inn	100	R R to Pawtucket	1 00
R R Newhaven	100	2 p.m. Pawtucket	70
Express Herald	100		
Indigo Inn	55		\$ 26 44
Carriage	50	Luny Salty at 7.	20 00
Tickets	30	Waltham board	14 00
Marriage	15		\$ 60 44

Record of personal expenditures, in Charles Frohman's handwriting, while traveling on behalf of his theatrical companies

Bowser, and a very prepossessing young man named Henry Woodruff.

"Baron Rudolph" proved to be a failure, and it broke Knight's heart, for shortly afterward he was committed to an insane asylum from which he never emerged alive. It was found that, while the play was well written, there was no sympathy for a ragged tramp.

Whether he thought it would change his

luck or not, Charles Frohman now turned to a different sort of enterprise. He had read in the newspapers about the astonishing 'mind-reading' feats in England of Washington Irving Bishop. Always on the lookout for something novel, he started a correspondence with Bishop which ended in a contract by which he agreed to present Bishop in the United States, in 1887.

Bishop came over, and Frohman spon-

sored his first appearance in New York on February 27, 1887, at Wallack's Theatre. With his genius for publicity, Frohman got an extraordinary amount of advertising out of this engagement. Among other things, he got Bishop to drive around New York blindfolded. He invited well-known men to come and witness his marvelous gift in private, all of which attracted a great deal of attention but very little money to the box-office. Frohman and Bishop differed about the conduct of the tour that was to follow, and M. B. Leavitt assumed the management.

While at 1215 Broadway, Charles Frohman established another of his many innovations by getting out what was probably the first stylographic press-sheet. This sheet, which contained news of the various attractions that Frohman booked, was sent to the various newspapers throughout the country and was the forerunner of the avalanche of press-matter that is now hurled at the dramatic editors throughout the country.

Charles Frohman's booking business had now grown so extensively that the office force was increased. First came Julius Cahn, who assisted Randall with the booking. Al Hayman took a desk in Frohman's office which, because of Hayman's extensive California enterprises, had a virtual monopoly on all Western booking.

Now developed a curious episode. Charles Frohman, with his devotion to big names, used the words "Daly's Theatre Building" on his letter-heads. This so infuriated Daly that he sent a peremptory message to the landlord insisting that Frohman vacate the building. Frohman and Randall thereupon

moved their offices up the block to 1267 Broadway.

Charles Frohman made every possible capitalization of this change.

Among other things he issued a broadside announcing the removal to new offices, and making the following characteristic statement:

Our agency, we are pleased to state, has been an established success

George Knight, whom Charles Frohman managed as "Baron Rudolph." The failure of this play drove the actor into the insane asylum

from the very start. We now represent every important theater in the United States and Canada, as an inspection of our list shows and we will always keep up the high standard of attractions that have been booked through this office



Mrs. George Knight
(Sophie Worrell)



The Life of Charles Frohman

and we want the business of no others. Mr. E. E. Rice, the well-known manager and author, will have adjoining offices with us and his attractions will be booked through our offices. We transact a general theatrical business (excepting that pertaining to a dramatic or actor's agency), and are in competition with no other exchange, booking agency, or dramatic concern. Neither do we have any desk-room to let, reserving all the space of our office for our own use.

Attached to this announcement was a list of theaters that he represented which was a foot long. He was also representing Archibald Clavering Gunter, who had followed up "A Wall Street Bandit" with "Prince Karl," and Robert Buchanan, author of "Lady Clare" and "Alone in London."

PARTNERSHIP DISSOLVED

Frohman and Randall stayed at 1267 Broadway for a year. Shortly before the next change, Randall, who had become extensively interested in outside enterprises, retired. His successor as close associate with Charles Frohman was Harry Rockwood, ablest of the early Frohman lieutenants.

Rockwood was a distinguished-looking man and a tireless worker. The way he came to be associated with Charles Frohman was interesting. His real name was H. Rockwood Hewitt, and he was related to former-Mayor Abram Hewitt, of New York. He had had some experience in Wall Street but became infected with the theatrical virus.

One day, in 1883, a well-groomed young man approached Gustave Frohman at the Fourteenth Street Theatre. He introduced himself as Harry Hewitt. He said to Frohman:

The next instalment tells the story of "Shenandoah." Subsequently he organizes his stock company, in which Maude Adams appears for the first time under his management. Now you find Frohman expanding as producer of big plays, as developer of playwrights, and acquiring an out-of-town theater.

"My name is Hewitt. I would like to get into the theatrical business."

Gustave invited him to come around to the Madison Square Theatre the next day and asked him what he would like to do.

"Oh, I should like to do anything."

Frohman then gave him an imaginary house to "count up."

A NEW PARTNER

Rockwood, who was an expert accountant, did the job with amazing swiftness. Whereupon, Gustave Frohman telephoned to Charles Frohman as follows,

"I've got the greatest treasurer in the world for you. Send for him."

Charles engaged him for a Madison Square Company, and in this way his theatrical career started. It was the fashion of many people of that time interested in the theatrical business to change their names, so he became Harry Rockwood. In the same way, Harry Hayman, brother of Al and Alf Hayman, changed his name to Harry Mann.

In 1889 came the separation between Randall and Frohman. Randall set up an establishment of his own at 1145 Broadway, while Charles, who was now an accredited and established personage in the theatrical world, took a suite at 1127 Broadway, adjoining the St. James Hotel. In making this change, he reached a crucial point in his career, for in these offices he conceived and put into execution the spectacular enterprises that linked his name for the first time with brilliant success. The world was now to know Charles Frohman in a big way.

Charles Frohman's first brilliant success, his stock company, in which Maude Adams appears for the first time under his management. Now you find Frohman expanding as producer of big plays, as developer of playwrights, and acquiring an out-of-town theater.

Twelve Christmas Gifts in One

What present can you give some of your friends, this Christmas, more suitable than one which will remind them of your regard not simply once, when received, but every month for twelve months to come?

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Christmas Subscription Department, Cosmopolitan Magazine
119 West 40th Street

New York City

The Twin Sisters

A PRESENT-DAY ROMANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

By Justus Miles Forman

Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg

SYNOPSIS—The parents of Diana and Alice Wayne were separated when they were mere children, twelve years before the opening of the story, which is the summer of 1913. Diana was brought up by her father, Charters Wayne, with the assistance of an old family friend, Vera Morris, Marchesa del Monte Bruno. Vera is the widow of an Italian nobleman and a woman of sterling worth and character. Consequently, Diana has turned out to be a frank, straightforward girl, energetic, fond of sports, and perhaps a little unconventional—in short, a typical American girl of the period. Alice was taken abroad by her mother, who calls herself Mrs. Martin-Wayne, and has lived chiefly in Italy ever since. She shows the effects of the restraint put upon girlhood by Continental custom and tradition. She will, on occasion, use the time-honored weapons of the weaker sex and can be both untruthful and deceitful.

The family meets accidentally on the Lake of Como, and it is arranged that Alice shall return with her father and sister to New York in the fall, to spend the winter. Alice is engaged to Lord Henry Borrold, a younger but middle-aged son of the Duke of Cheswick who had known the Waynes in America before the separation. Diana has an ardent admirer, an Italian, Count Gianlodovico Pola, who, when she refuses to marry him, tries to abduct her in a motor-boat, and she escapes from him with difficulty.

The early autumn finds Wayne and the two girls in New York, and Lord Henry Borrold arrives. Alice makes the most of her first opportunity to enjoy the social life of a great city. She develops a great fondness for masculine attention and does not behave any too discreetly. Diana observes with uneasiness the weak traits of her sister's character, and reasons with her on the possible consequences of her folly. She is further distressed when Alice remarks slurringly upon the position of Vera Monte Bruno in the household, saying that she thinks the *marchesa* is on rather odd terms of intimacy with their father, considering that he is a married man. The fact is that Wayne and Vera have long been in love with each other, and it is the tragedy of their lives that they did not marry. But Wayne plans to get a divorce from his wife on the grounds of desertion as soon as his daughters are married, and hopes that the *marchesa* will then become his wife. Alice, fearing that the divorce would injure her social position in England, cables her mother to return at once to America.

Diana has an admirer in one Quintus P. Brown, a self-made Westerner only thirty-four, who has already been in Congress. He wants her to give up the frivolity of social life and go West with him as his wife. She met him in Europe, where he had been unsuccessfully searching for a sister who had eloped with a Pole. Diana is hesitating about accepting him when the sister turns up in New York, and gives her a most unattractive picture of her brother's domineering nature.

Meanwhile, Lord Henry, who does not share Alice's passion for constant gaiety, sees more and more of Diana, and they become great friends. He tells her that he expects to be called to London on account of some family trouble. Wayne thinks that he will go South, so as not to be in New York when his wife, who is coming in response to Alice's cable, arrives. Just before the event, he and Lord Henry and Brown are walking through a side street when they pass some bachelor apartments. Wayne remarks that a friend of the girls, Tommy Ainley, lives in one of them, that it is exactly the sort of place for pretty ladies "if they are sporting enough" to visit. As he says it, a girl and a man run down the steps to a taxi-cab. "Good God, that's Diana!" he exclaims, and tries to press forward, but a coal-chute across the sidewalk bars the way.

"**H**ERE, wait a bit!" Wayne called out. "Wait!" But the street was full of the noise of traffic, and the two young people, without another glance about them, got into a taxi that was waiting at the curb and drove rapidly away.

Charters Wayne stood still in the lamp-lit dark of Thirty-seventh Street, his face

flushed almost purple, and stared from one to the other of his companions.

"That was Diana!" he declared truculently. "I tell you it was Diana coming out of that young blackguard's house"—he paused a moment—"or Alice." And when they didn't speak, he pounded on the pavement with his stick.

"Which was it, eh? Which was it? This is a serious matter that I've got to get to

The Twin Sisters

the bottom of. That girl was one of my daughters. You're young men. Your eyes are better than mine. Which one was it? Come; speak up!"

"It's quite dark here," Lord Henry Borrold said, at last. "We may—you may have been altogether deceived. It may merely have been a chance resemblance." But his tone altogether lacked conviction, and Wayne gave a brief laugh of scorn.

"Rubbish! It was nothing of the sort, and you know it quite well. Was that woman Alice, or was it Diana?"

"I don't know," Lord Henry said, and the elder man turned from him with a snort and faced Quintus Brown.

"Who came out of that house just now? You've a tongue in your head. Who was it?"

"I think," Quintus Brown said rather sternly, "that it was Miss Alice, but of course I am not sure."

Wayne was silent for a moment.

"I tell you again," he said, after it, "that this is a serious matter, and it is a matter that concerns all three of us. You, Borrold, are engaged to marry one of my daughters, and Brown has asked my permission to pay his addresses to the other one. We have all seen one of them slip out of the flat of a none too reputable young man after dark. For everybody's sake, all three of us have got to know which it was, and two of us at least have got to hear what explanation she can make."

He held up his stick to a passing cab, and the vehicle drew alongside.

"Get in! I'm afraid your other engagements will have to wait. This thing must be investigated now."

They drove to Sixty-sixth Street almost in silence. Once, Lord Henry said:

"I should like to go on record as not quite agreeing that this thing ought to be had out in public. For my part, I am perfectly willing to consult Alice privately."

"I think I am right in making a family matter of it," Wayne replied rather heavily. And Lord Henry said:

"Of course they're your daughters. You can do as you like." And, after a silence he tried, once more. "Don't you think we might postpone the—the inquisition until to-morrow? I would suggest that just now you're a bit—angry and inclined to look on the dark side."

"It's a dark business!" said Mr. Quintus

Brown unexpectedly, from the other side of the cab. "I think Mr. Wayne is quite right to have it cleared up at the earliest possible moment."

Lord Henry looked across at him with a kind of mild wonder, shook his head, and nothing more was said until they drew up before the house in Sixty-sixth Street.

Wayne asked at the door if his daughters were in the house, and the man said that Miss Alice had come in five minutes before, but that Miss Diana was still out. Wayne said,

"Ask Miss Alice to come to the drawing-room," and led the other two there. He looked at his watch, and it was a quarter past six.

Alice came down presently, raising her eyebrows in surprise at the three solemn figures that confronted her. Lord Henry Borrold might have been seen to glance intently at her hat, and then to withdraw his eyes with something like a little sigh of relief; but nobody was watching Lord Henry.

"What's all this about?" Alice wished to know. "It looks very serious." And her father said:

"It is serious. Did you leave a flat in East Thirty-seventh Street with young Thomas Ainley, twenty minutes ago?"

The girl's face flushed crimson.

"I did not," she said angrily, "and, even if you are my father, you ought to be ashamed to ask me such a question. Do you think it is my habit to spend the afternoons in men's flats?"

"No, my dear," her father said gently; "no. And I apologize for asking the question. It had to be asked, here and now, but nobody could be more sorry to ask it than I was."

"That is all you have to say, then?" she demanded.

"That is all," Wayne answered, and she started to leave the room, but he called her back.

"Where is Diana?"

"I don't know. She was at the tango class an hour ago."

"She'll be in presently. Just wait with us here, if you don't mind."

Alice frowned.

"You'll make me very late with dressing. I have to dine before the opera."

"This is more important than your dinner or the opera," her father said, and, at the



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

DRAWN BY JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

He had sunk down in a chair and covered his face. Diana watched him, and started to speak again, but gave it up. There was, after all, nothing more to say.

The Twin Sisters

rather peremptory tone, she sat down, but not with a very good grace.

They heard a sound presently like that of the front door closing below, and Alice sprang up again.

"That must be Diana now! I'll tell her you want her."

But Wayne waved his daughter back to her seat.

"I've left word. She'll come to us here at once."

She didn't, as a matter of fact. They waited some minutes in silence. Once Wayne rose and went half-way to the bell, but it occurred to him, perhaps, that it might not have been Diana behind whom that door had closed, and he returned to his place, pulling out a handkerchief to wipe his brow. He moved heavily, and his face was still flushed. Then, at last, they heard footsteps, and Diana hurried into the room. She had no hat or cloak.

"I'm sorry," she said, a little breathlessly to her father. "It seems you left word for me at the door, but Banks had gone and the other man didn't understand. I got your message only after I had gone up-stairs." She looked from face to face of the four people in the room, nodding with a smile to Quintus Brown, and then took a step toward her father.

"Nothing is wrong?" she asked. "What is it?" And before he could answer, she came nearer, with an exclamation of concern. "You look frightfully ill! I've never seen you look like that before. What in the world is the matter?"

But Wayne held up his hand to check her.

"Where have you been this afternoon?"

"I? Oh, goodness me, I've been all over the place! I went to see Hope Bacon, and she and Linda Latimer and I took a flying peep at the Morgan pictures in the museum, and then I dropped in at the tango class, and then I went to Vera's, and then I came home. Why?"

"You didn't visit Mr. Thomas Ainley at his flat in Thirty-seventh Street, then?" her father demanded sharply. "You didn't leave there with Ainley in a taxi-cab, half an hour ago?"

Diana stared at him for an instant in silence, and looked once more slowly from face to face of the other people standing together in a kind of circle. She seemed to consider, to reflect, but only for a moment.

"And, after all, why not?" she asked, at

length. "I have known Tommy Ainley all my life. He's a little fool, but he's not a dangerous fool, and he has one of the best collections of Persian miniatures in existence. I've been there before—twice, in fact, with other people. Why shouldn't I go alone? I'm not afraid of Tommy Ainley, and you surely are not afraid for me?"

Her father, sitting behind the table from which Diana was used to dispense tea, bowed his head.

"I may not be afraid for you," said he, "but I am ashamed of you. You and I will talk about this later. We've had enough for the present."

"Quite, I should think," said Diana, and turned away. She glanced at Quintus Brown, and he was gazing at her under his brows, his face as darkly flushed as Wayne's face. Diana went toward the door; but Lord Henry Borrold spoke, and she looked back. He said:

"I want to make it clear that I was opposed to this—this scene, and I want to apologize for my presence in it. You will have gathered, no doubt, what it was that happened. Your father and Brown and I saw a lady with a young man come out of a house in Thirty-seventh Street. It was dark, and we couldn't be certain whether the lady was you or Alice. Your father insisted upon clearing the matter up and releasing the—the one of you who hadn't been there from suspicion."

"Running down the criminal," Diana supplied.

"Exactly. I didn't like it, but I couldn't stop it—and there you are! I'm sorry."

"Perhaps," Diana said, "it was, everything considered, the best thing to do, though a little Spanish in character. Thanks, Henry, for not liking it." She looked once more toward Quintus Brown, shook her head, and went out of the room.

Alice followed her up-stairs, and found her standing beside a window, in tears. She turned upon her sister furiously.

"You've made me tell a lie! You've made me tell a ghastly, vicious lie! I'd almost rather steal or commit murder than tell lies, and you've made me tell one. You've made me look like a—like heaven knows what to my own father and to Henry and to Quintus Brown!"

"You needn't have," Alice said, with a sullen face. "If you begrimed saving me, you needn't have done it."

"Needn't have done it! With you standing there, shaking all over and doing everything but go down on your knees to me! What choice had I?"

Alice began to cry.

"It would have done for me, absolutely, to be caught like that. Henry would have thrown me over, and you know it."

"I know," Diana said, "that it would have served you jolly well right if he had." She went closer, staring into her sister's face. "You must be almost a maniac. No sane woman in your position would have run such a risk. Anybody might have seen you going into that wretched flat, or coming out—just anybody! I say nothing about the decency or indecency of it. Do you do those things like a child, without looking ahead to the danger, or do you do them with your eyes open?"

The other girl's eyes were full of a kind of honest bewilderment.

"Diana, I don't know. I give you my word, I don't know. Sometimes there's just no resisting the—the fun of doing what you want to do. I suppose it's like gambling. Half the fun is in the risk. And I wasn't there more than twenty minutes, and it was quite dark in the street. And he said nobody one knew ever went through Thirty-seventh Street. How could you expect father and Henry and your Brown man to be prowling about together?"

"I warned you once about Tommy Ainley. You might have remembered."

Alice averted her eyes.

"Mr. Ainley is in Palm Beach. Conte Pola has his flat."

Diana gave a sudden exclamation.

"Gian'vico Pola! You went into a flat after dark, alone with Gian'vico Pola? You must be absolutely crazy! Tommy Ainley might have made a little harmless love to you when he got you there, but Pola is absolutely unscrupulous. And when you went there with him, of course he thought you were, too—Look here: What did he do?"

"He didn't do anything," Alice said sullenly. "He has a little intelligence, I suppose. As a matter of fact, he has a great deal more than you think. You don't understand him at all. He spoke about Mr. Ainley's Persian pictures when we were at the tango class this afternoon, and I said I wished I could see them, and why didn't he have a tea-party one day? He said he'd

have a tea-party of two if I'd come then and there. I told him not to be silly, and said it was quite out of the question, but he kept on talking about it, and about how nobody would ever know, and, well, I was a little fool, and I went. As to his *doing* anything, he behaved very nicely indeed. He said he would, and he did."

Diana scrubbed at her eyes with a wet little ball of handkerchief.

"I should feel almost better about it," she said, with great bitterness, "if it had been some desperate love-affair—if you had gone there to meet some one you couldn't otherwise have met—if there had been some size to the thing—some importance. As it is, I have to suffer for a wretched little casual whim that brought you nothing. When I think how my father looked, I could cut my throat. I've never seen him look like that before—never. It has half killed him."

"If you ask me," observed her sister, "I should say that our good father's looks came more from being half-seas over than from grief about you. If you ask me, I think he'll be very different about it to-morrow."

"Half-seas over?"

"He's been drinking. Anyone would know that. He's had about all he can carry. He wouldn't have made that ridiculous scene if he had been sober. You wait until to-morrow—and see."

Diana stared at her, but before she could find words to reply, one of the footmen was at the door, saying that Mr. Brown begged Miss Diana to see him for a moment below.

"Say I'll be down at once," she returned, and went across to a glass to look at her reddened eyes. Alice followed her in a sudden panic.

"You won't tell him? You won't give me away?"

"What! Not tell Quintus Brown? I've saved your neck with father and with Henry Borrold. You surely don't want Quintus Brown to go on thinking impossible things about me?"

"If he knows, he'll tell. They'll find out. For heaven's sake, don't tell him!"

"Oh, you'd like me to be thrown over instead of you? Quintus Brown wants to marry me, you know. He's just as keen on it as Henry Borrold is on marrying you." She turned and eyed her sister curiously. "My life is to be smashed up as a result of



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"I am so glad! I'm so tremendously glad! He was a pig, that man! I thought so from



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the very beginning—a great, heavy-footed pig of an outsider! You're well rid of him!"

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your little tea-party. Is that what you want?"

"You offered," Alice said. "You took it on yourself. I didn't ask you to save me."

"You begged me. Your eyes begged me, and you know it!"

Alice burst into a flood of tears and collapsed into a chair, hiding her face. Diana stood watching her for an instant, and then turned away and left the room.

Diana found Quintus Brown alone in the drawing-room. He seemed to have been walking about the place, but halted as she entered. And he seemed to have been tearing his hair in good melodramatic fashion, too, for it stood up about his high brow quite wildly. Diana said:

"It's shockingly late, and I've only a moment, so let's be as quick as we can. What am I? Am I the prodigal daughter about to be forgiven and fed on veal, or am I the abandoned woman about to be cast off forever with curses?"

Quintus Brown gave a kind of groan and ran his hands through his hair.

"For God's sake," said he, "don't be fliprant and brazen now! It's no time for that. We must talk this terrible thing over seriously."

"Terrible thing!" Diana went closer to him, staring into his face. "Just why is it a terrible thing?"

"You don't need to be told that," he said sternly. "You are a grown woman. You know that whatever you may or may not have done in that fellow's room, the very fact of your being there has compromised you hopelessly."

She shook her head in wonder.

"Do you know, you're almost the last person I should have thought capable of taking a quite conventional point of view about such a thing. I thought you looked upon chaperonage and all that as silly and unhealthy."

"And so I do," said he. "I spoke of your being compromised, because I thought that would be the aspect of the thing most certain to appeal to you. I take it back. It's not the breaking of a convention I object to; it is the fact—the thing you have done."

"Well," Diana asked, with surprising meekness, "what is your fact? You see me coming out of the flat of a young man who is an old family friend—a young man I have known ever since I was a baby——"

"A young man," he interrupted, "whom your own father has called disreputable."

"Oh, did father say that? That's rather harsh. Tommy Ainley has a reputation for always making love to women; his family is a Southern family, you see, and he feels he has to live up to the tradition; but it's going pretty strong to call him disreputable. Father must have been a little excited to say that. As a matter of fact, my father was rather excited and hectic about this absurd thing. You see, he has had a hard day. He has been worried and depressed about another matter—very much depressed, indeed—and I fancy seeing one of his daughters coming out of Tommy Ainley's flat was just the last straw. It was too much for him."

"Well, there we are! I'm convicted of doing an unconventional and, I confess, a pretty silly thing. I'm sorry about it, but not bowed down. I think, perhaps, you had better be sorry but not bowed down, too."

Brown ran his fingers through his hair again.

"We can't just drop this as if nothing had occurred!" he cried. "You seem to have no realization whatever of how serious a thing it is. You want to laugh at it and let it go. I tell you frankly, that's not good enough."

Again Diana looked at him with a kind of wonder.

"I suppose you mean *I* am not good enough. Well—this is as suitable a time and occasion as any, I dare say. I'll spare you the pain of casting me off. I cast myself off. This isn't precisely the farewell scene I had pictured, but it will do. Good-by, Mr. Quintus Brown! And good luck to you!"

She smiled upon him, and turned and went toward the door. But before she had reached it, she heard his feet upon the floor, and his voice called to her, hoarse and unsteady:

"Stop! Stop!"

He was breathing hard, a man obviously in distress.

"We can't part like this! We mustn't! Good heavens, do you think I'm a wooden man? Do you think I can let you go so easily?" He came closer to her, "You don't know what it is to suffer. I tell you, I'm in hell over this wretched business."

"Why?"

He ignored the "Why."

"Will you give me your sacred word of honor that there is, and has been, nothing between you and the man whose rooms you went to to-day?"

Diana made a little face of disgust.

"So that is how well you know me! Oh, there's no good in talking! You'd much better let me go." Indeed, she turned once more as if she meant to leave the room, but, at her action, Quintus Brown gave a sudden, hoarse cry.

"No; I take it back! You needn't answer. I want you." He was trembling violently. "I want you, whatever you have been or done. I can't do without you. For God's sake, Diana, come to me!"

Diana looked at him, shaking her head with pity.

"I'm sorry you said that. I'm very sorry. Believing the dreadful things you believed, it would have been so much finer and truer of you to turn your back on me and go your way. I wish you might have done that, because then I could have remembered you as at least living up to your lights—instead of breaking down and crying for me as if I were drink or drugs—something you'd become a slave to.

"If it's any good to you, now, however, I'll give you the word of honor that you asked for. There certainly never has been anything between me and poor Tommy Ainley. The idea is so absurd that I could laugh at it. And, after that, I'll just say, again, 'Good-by.' No; let me finish, please! It isn't on account of what happened to-day that I'm sending you off. I had meant to do it before. I'd meant to write to you or to see you as soon as you returned from Washington, and tell you that I was sure, at last, about you and me. I've been a long time finding out that we don't belong together, but I've found it out at last, quite beyond the chance of mistake."

"Why?" he asked her brokenly. "Why?"

"It's too long a story. I could tell you, I think, but it would do no good, and you wouldn't like it. Let's just say that you and I haven't the same traditions or hopes, or ideas or ideals, that we don't think the same thoughts or speak the same language, that we live in different worlds. There's no possible happiness for two such people. I thought for a long time there might be, but now I know I was wrong." She held out her hand. "Go back to your own world,

Quintus Brown, and be a strong man there. I shall hear and read about what you are doing, and I shall wish you well. But I shall always know that my place was not there with you, and you'll know it, too, and be glad that we found out in time."

He didn't see the hand she had extended to him, because he had sunk down in a chair and covered his face. Diana watched him, and started to speak again, but gave it up. There was, after all, nothing more to say. She could have detailed to the man the picture of him that she had been for so long a time putting together out of bits and fragments, like a picture-puzzle, and she could have told him how very unalluring it seemed to her, now that it had been completed by his sister's recent contribution and his own of this day. But it would only have hurt and angered him, and she had no wish to do that. She had said all that was necessary. She looked once more upon the big, bowed figure, the giant of her fancies—the caveman, as she had liked to call him—and as he neither stirred nor spoke, she turned and went out of the room, closing the door behind her.

XV

DIANA saw neither her father nor her sister again that day, for she came straight home from the opera instead of going on to a party where they were rather sure to be. But the next morning, as she was drinking her coffee and reading her letters in bed, Alice came into the room, very nervous and anxious and propitiatory, like a child that knows it has behaved badly but hopes its sin has been forgiven and forgotten.

She didn't come straight to the point, but talked a little about the party of the evening before, and who was there, and why hadn't Diana turned up for it. But at last, since her sister proffered no help, she brought in Mr. Quintus Brown. Had he made a great row, or had he taken things sensibly?

"It depends on what you call sensible," Diana said. "He acted as I suppose most men would have done in the circumstances, and it's all off between us. He'll go back West at once, I fancy. At any rate, I've seen the last of him."

Alice turned pale and stared at her sister with frightened eyes.

"Do you really mean that? You're not chaffing me?"

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"It's not a very funny subject," Diana observed.

"No, it isn't. But I couldn't believe you. The wretched prig! The beastly great cad! I thought he'd be all right about it. He seemed to me so different from other ordinary people. I'm sure they do the most outrageous things where he lives—girls do, I mean. I've heard all kinds of stories. And yet he throws you over for just nothing—nothing!"

"You didn't think it was nothing yesterday," Diana pointed out, "when you were so anxious father and Henry Borrold shouldn't know the truth."

She would have liked to be sweet and kind about the matter this morning, but she was nervous, and Alice irritated her almost beyond bearing.

"That was different. Henry has been brought up in a certain kind of tradition. At heart he's frightfully conventional and hates women who—who do anything queer. But your Quintus Brown—I didn't suppose he knew what conventions were."

She twisted the lace edge of Diana's sheet between her fingers, frowning down at it.

"I suppose," she said, with slow reluctance, "I could ask him—your Quintus Brown—to come and see me, or else write him a letter and tell him the truth, if he'd swear never to let it out."

"Yes; you might do that."

Alice shivered.

"It would be sure to get out, somehow. I don't quite know. I have my duty to Henry, you see. I must go and think it over. I'm frightfully sorry for what has happened—you've no idea how sorry I am—and I suppose you'll blame me and hate me forever. But I simply had to save myself on Henry's account. I'll think it over quite quietly, and see if there is anything I can do." She rose, looked at her sister as if she were debating whether it was the thing to kiss her or not, sighed, and turned away. Diana called her back from the door.

"I suppose no great harm would be done by letting you worry a little, and I'm pretty fairly certain of how much your 'thinking it over' would come to; but I hate people worrying, so I'll let you off. Quintus Brown didn't dismiss me yesterday, though he meant to, I think. I dismissed him, instead. I had been meaning to do it, and I took that opportunity. So my heart is not

broken and my life is not wrecked, and your secret is, so far as I am aware, quite safe."

Alice gave a little scream of relief and delight, flung herself upon her sister, and kissed her ecstatically.

"I am so glad! I'm so tremendously glad! He was a pig, that man! I thought so from the very beginning—a great, heavy-footed pig of an outsider! You're well rid of him." She wanted to sit down on the edge of the bed and hear all about it, but Diana wouldn't let her.

"No; not now, please! I've letters to write and messages to telephone—a thousand things. We'll talk another time."

Alice got up reluctantly.

"I do hope mother won't want me to go and stay with her at her hotel. But I dare say you'll be glad to get rid of me."

"Oh, yes," Diana said; "she arrives tomorrow, doesn't she? She must have made her preparations very quickly after she got your cablegram."

Alice looked up quickly and away again.

"I only did what I believed to be my duty."

"I'm sure you did, my dear," said Diana. "Will you ring for my maid as you go out? The bell-thing has slipped away from under my pillow."

But, after Alice had gone, she lay where she was for some time, frowning, her arms stretched over her head. She was not frowning at her sister's little mean indirections and cowardlinesses but at the reaction from them which she detected in herself and hated. It was natural enough that she should be irritated by some of the things Alice did. She didn't mind that. But she was afraid that constant exasperation had begun to make her a bit revengeful and cruel. She was aware that she would like Alice to suffer—not greatly, but a little—for her misdeeds, that she hated to see her do mean things and come off scot-free. That was partly a wholesome desire to see justice done in the world, but it was partly, too, a growing personal dislike, and she regarded it with great dismay.

She wished she could go to Henry Borrold and explain to him that she felt herself becoming spiteful, and ask him what he thought she could do about it. He had a kind of calm wisdom about all sorts of things that she valued and made great use of. Henry Borrold would be sure to give her



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very good advice, but, of course, in this matter he was out of the question.

She thought of his troubled, determined face when he had spoken up in the drawing-room the day before. He had been kindly and generous, as he always was. He had wanted to spare her. And all that time she had lied to him, and must go on lying to him, about a thing which he had a right to know. That aspect of the mean little story had not occurred to her until now: that Henry Borrold was being deceived and cheated; that the whole wretched comedy had been played for that one purpose—to trick him into a security which, in fact, did not exist.

She didn't, of course, for a single instant believe her sister had been more than foolish in going to Thirty-seventh Street alone with Gian'vico Pola, but foolish she certainly had been—dangerously foolish, and, in all probability, it seemed to Diana, she would go on doing dangerous things like that—since she seemed to have no power of inhibition—until one day she would be altogether too rash and come some dreadful cropper.

And when that day arrived, Diana would know that she herself had helped prepare for it by conspiring to hide the truth—she who had never told anything but the truth in all her life, she to whom honesty and straightforwardness and "speaking out" were a kind of creed—virtues set at the head of all others.

It was the first deliberate lie that she could remember ever to have told—leaving out of consideration the many little white lies of convention that people tell to spare the feelings of others—and though she had told it for the sake of some one else and at great sacrifice to herself, she reflected upon it with bitterness and shame and self-hatred. It seemed to her to have left her spotted and unclean, and when she reflected further that it had both deceived Henry Borrold and made him think unnecessarily ill of her at the same time, it seemed too much to bear, and, to her own great astonishment, tears burned her eyes suddenly and began to run fast down her cheeks.

Happily, an hour or so later, she had a brief interview with her father which removed at least one of the clouds from her sky and left her in a much more cheerful mood. He sent for her, as he had done on the preceding morning, to come to his

sitting-room, and she went there, bowed down with woe, expecting the further talk he had so curiously promised her in the presence of Alice and the two men. Instead, she found him sheepish and apologetic.

"Look here: I encountered Vera last evening at a party, and she said you had been with her yesterday from five-thirty until well after six—that she had dropped you here, as a matter of fact, from her motor. I hadn't asked her questions about you; she volunteered the information. So it wasn't you we saw in Thirty-seventh Street; it was Alice, and you were trying to shield her. I'm sorry. I'm sorry for a number of things—first, that Alice should have behaved like a contemptible little sneak—she denied straight out that it was she whom we had seen, though she knew that it was a choice between her and you—second, that you should have shouldered her responsibilities, and third, that I should have been inspired by the devil to make a nasty scene of the thing. I'd better explain, by the way, that I'd had a long talk with a lawyer and one with Vera that had left me very low, and that I had tried to drink myself back into good humor again. Frankly, I was about half tight, or perhaps three-quarters."

Diana laughed with mingled relief and amusement, for her father looked so very like a middle-aged schoolboy who had misbehaved and was sorry for it. The matter of his trying to drink himself into a good humor failed to alarm her, for she knew quite well that that was not his usual way. She kissed him with great emphasis, and made him sit down in his favorite chair and perched herself on the arm of it.

"Never mind about all that. So long as you understand how it was, I don't care. I'm sorry Henry Borrold had to be deceived, but there seemed no other way out of it, and perhaps Alice was sufficiently frightened to be more careful in the future. At any rate, it gave me an opportunity to end things between Mr. Quintus Brown and myself. And that's something gained."

"Do you mean you've chucked Brown?" her father asked, with a lively interest. "Good—good enough! I'm glad to hear that. The fellow wasn't fit for you, my dear, and I was afraid you would marry him before you found it out."

"I might have," she said, nodding. "I almost brought myself to it once or twice,

but somebody saved me, and I'm very glad. There were fine things about Quintus Brown. I still admire him very much in certain ways, but he wasn't for me, and I'm glad I found it out in time, though it leaves me hanging forlorn on the parent stem, and I shall probably take to good works and die an old maid." She kissed the top of her father's sleek, gray head. "I gather you decided to take no immediate steps about—about mother."

He shook his head, sighing.

"There seemed to be so many difficulties in the way. It wasn't as simple as I had hoped. And there was danger of its getting into the papers and hurting Alice." He looked up with a resentful face. "We all mean to be very busy with shielding Alice—don't we?—the one member of the family who deserves consideration last of all, and who never has any for other people. I suppose it's always like that."

"Well, we're all sorry for her," Diana said, "because for so many years she went without what all the rest of us had—amusement and nice friends and society and travel—happiness, in short. We all try to give her her chance. I wonder, by the way, if mc'her will want her?"

Wayne looked up again.

"I shouldn't be altogether sorry if she did. And I fancy you wouldn't be, either—eh?"

"I'm fond of Alice," Diana said. "But I'm beginning to feel horribly conscious that I'm not as fond of her as I was in the beginning. She—I hardly know how to put it—she rouses things in me that I hate and that I'm afraid of—qualities, I mean—hateful, cruel qualities."

"She's getting on your nerves," said Wayne. "That is quite plain and simple. She's getting on my nerves, too. We must try to suggest to her mother that she will be lonely at a hotel without Alice."

"Perhaps—I don't want to be selfish, you know. I want to do all I can for Alice."

"It seems to me," her father pointed out, "that you've already done rather more than is customary or necessary. This taking the blame for other people's sins isn't the usual sort of thing, you know—not in well-regulated households. I don't think of you as quite a selfish person."

Diana looked down at him thoughtfully.

"I might be, if I were sure it was the best thing. I think it's quite possible to be

foolishly and mistakenly unselfish—to do great harm by making sacrifices. I may have done great harm yesterday, for example. I hope not—in fact, I think not; but I promise you I shouldn't always give up what was mine just because there's a tradition that it is a fine thing to do. I've seen it work out pretty badly."

"So have I," Wayne said. "My God, so have I!" And he got up from his chair and went and stood before a window, with his back turned.

Diana hadn't meant him to take that to himself, and, when he did, she was sorry she had spoken, but there was no good explaining now that she had been thinking of quite other cases. So she held her tongue, and presently, when her father had been silent some little time and she knew he had forgotten her, she slipped as quietly as she could out of the room and closed the door.

XVI

IT was with mixed but imperfectly blended feelings that Diana went to the Lorraine to see her mother on the afternoon of that lady's arrival in New York. Until the past fortnight she had been rather eager for her mother to come—eager against a kind of instinct that the coming was sure, in some unknown fashion, to disturb a situation of calm that were better left undisturbed. No doubt that eagerness had been, in great part, sheer curiosity, but it was more than that. Grafted upon her early, vague disapproval of the woman who had abandoned husband and child was that picture—a kind of swift snap-shot—of a pretty and gracious and fond presence seen so briefly at the Lake of Como. The picture was very vivid in her mind, though so lacking in detail—underexposed, to continue the snap-shot figure of speech—because it had made, at the time, so strong an impression upon her, had roused in her such a passion of new tenderness and the want of tenderness—a child suddenly discovering mother-love—so that, if nothing had happened afterward to affect its value, she would doubtless have gone on in a state of almost intolerable eagerness to see and know the mother whom fate had so early removed from her. But two or three talks with Alice had more than a little modified her ardor, and the revelations of the past fortnight had filled her with foreboding and fear.



In the lobby down-stairs she encountered Lord Henry Borrold, who was calling to pay his respects to Mrs. Martin-Wayne. Diana had expected to find that sweet and charming lady of the lakeside. In a sense, it was so. In outward aspect, her mother was much the same—a little thinner, perhaps, and rather paler than she had been; and she greeted Diana

Nevertheless, though she went to the hotel wishing with all her heart that Mrs. Martin-Wayne had remained on the other side of the Atlantic, she still expected to find that sweet and charming lady of the lakeside. In a sense, it was so. In outward aspect, her mother was much the same—a little thinner, perhaps, and rather paler than she had been; and she greeted Diana

very affectionately and made her sit close beside her on the stiff little sofa, and held her hands while they talked. But there was something wanting and something wrong. Under that pleasant, slightly old-fashioned surface, there seemed to the girl to be a woman alert and cautious and watchful, paying a great many pretty compliments but, in the same breath, asking as many



respects to his future mother-in-law. She felt in no condition to meet anyone—not even the black sheep, Henry! I don't know whether you care to speak to it or not."

innocent-seeming questions that, on examination, weren't so innocent as they seemed.

She began to be very uncomfortable, and wished that Alice or her father were there; but Alice, who had gone to the pier to meet the ship in response to a wireless message, was out, Mrs. Martin-Wayne said, "buying two or three little necessary things for me, dear child!" And there was no sign of

Charters Wayne. She tried, after a time, to escape from that eternal, delicate probing—about her activities, about her father, about her earlier life, about the place in the country where most of her girlhood had been spent, and who were the people she had seen there most often—by asking what her mother meant to do with herself in New York, and how she could be of service. And

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Mrs. Martin-Wayne, as if she saw that the searching probe had been felt and resented, withdrew it instantly and began to talk of commonplace things, but, even then, Diana was still conscious of the watchful eye, of that inward alertness, of the difference between the smiling face and something hard and ruthless and determined beneath it.

She passed a miserable hour and got away, at last, in a state of great dejection. In the lobby down-stairs she encountered Lord Henry Borrold, who was calling to pay his respects to his future mother-in-law. She felt in no condition to meet anybody—not even Henry Borrold—but she pulled herself together and managed a smile.

"Here's the black sheep, Henry! I don't know whether you care to speak to it or not."

It was their first meeting since the inquisitorial scene in Sixty-sixth Street, two days back. Lord Henry squeezed her hand.

"Don't you be an ass, Diana! What business is it of mine if you choose to make calls?"

"Oh, well, no business of yours, I suppose; but one dislikes losing the good opinion of old pals like you."

"You'd find it hard work managing to lose that," he said, with great emphasis. "Don't you suppose I knew from the beginning that if you went to call on young Ainslee, or whatever the johnny's name is, it was either for very good and sufficient reason or else for no reason at all—which is better yet? You might do something that looked unfortunate to people who didn't know you, but you couldn't *do* anything that was unfortunate, because it isn't in you. I confess I'm glad it was you and not Alice that I saw coming out of that place, because, well, Alice is engaged to be married, and therefore oughtn't to be larking about too violently. And, besides, she's different. You could do things, and come through smiling, that Alice oughtn't even to try. I don't suppose I make myself at all clear—what?"

"You make yourself very agreeable, anyhow, old Henry," she said. "And, for the second time in your life, you stand in great danger of being kissed. It seems to me, you know, that you look a bit down. Has the bad news gone on getting badder? I do hope not."

"Oh, badder and badder!" he said, shrugging his shoulders. "The truth is, I'm wor-

ried—I'm worried twice over. There's this rotten mess that I've already spoken about. I wish I could go into it with you, but, for various reasons, I can't. It threatens to become acute; I hear some dashed scandal-mongering paper in London has got hold of it and is trying to blackmail my father with the story. And then, besides, poor old Denforth, my elder brother, you know, is in a bad way. He's been ill for two years or more, but nobody thought it was very serious. Now, it seems it's very serious indeed, and he's got to have an operation. I'm sailing day after to-morrow."

"Does Alice know?" Diana asked.

"Well, I had to tell her a little. Of course she wanted to know all about it, but I couldn't go that far, not even with her. I hope she won't cut up too rough if it does get out in print. Oh, I didn't say anything about poor Denforth. To tell the truth, I didn't mean to peep about that to anybody. But one gets so accustomed to running to you with things. Just keep that to yourself, won't you? Alice—well, you see there are certain things that Alice wants—quite natural, proper things to want; but at a time like this, with Denforth in a bad way, I shouldn't like her to be—well, speculating on what might occur—*You* know."

"Yes," Diana said; "I know, Henry. And you can trust me. I'm frightfully sorry about the whole thing. But I'm particularly sorry about Lord Denforth, and I hope, with all my heart, he'll come out all right."

Lord Henry wrung her hand.

"Thanks, old girl! I hope so, too. I hope so very hard, for all kinds of reasons, but in particular because we, Denforth and I, have never got on very well, and I dare say a good bit of the disagreement has been my fault. If Denforth lives, I suppose he and I will continue to go our separate ways, but if he dies, I shall always feel a bit guilty about him, and I shall always wish I'd tried harder to understand what he had to cope with and made more allowance for him. I've called him hard names now and then, and—dash it!—they come back to me, one by one."

Diana looked at his grave and sensitive face and nodded a little somberly.

"I know, Henry; I know. I've—I've done a bit of that, myself." (She must have been thinking of Alice, and of how she would feel if Alice were in danger of her life this day.) "But I'll tell you something: I don't

believe there's a man living who hasn't done it—who hasn't said and done things to some one who ought to have been close to him in sympathy and affection and yet, somehow, wasn't. And I'll tell you another thing: I don't believe there is a man living who, in any given circumstances, would do less of it than you—who's kinder and more understanding and more generous."

He looked up at her with eyes so bright that they might have been full of sudden tears; said, in an odd tone, half grave, half gay, "God bless you, my dear!" and turned and went rapidly away toward the elevator.

She would have liked to go to Vera Monte Bruno, as it was her custom to do when she was low or troubled or perplexed, but it seemed to her that, in a matter concerning her own mother, there was nobody in the world she could consult or ask advice of—except her father; and it had never been her habit to take her troubles to him, because, despite his great kindness and affection and sympathy, he hated troubles, whether his own or those of other people, and fled them when he could, and dreaded giving advice, because he said his advice invariably turned out to be wrong.

She found him just leaving the house in Sixty-sixth Street as she entered, and he turned back for a moment.

"You've seen your mother?" he asked.

Diana, in a lifeless tone, said that she had, and Wayne rubbed the back of his head.

"I saw her myself for a few minutes, earlier, and I'm to dine with her. You found her—" he looked round at Diana—"a bit—well, watchful and cautious—eh? Not quite what you had expected?"

Diana nodded miserably, dropping down into a chair, and Wayne looked at her, pursing out his lips.

"Well—you must remember that she has dashed over here in response to Alice's call, to—to do battle, as it were, for her rights. You must remember that. And you must remember that Alice has been at her since her arrival, and has put me in a pretty bad light, and represented you as completely in sympathy with me. And you and I look a fine pair of conspirators."

Diana looked up a little more hopefully.

"I hadn't thought of all that. Oh dear, what's to come of it all?"

And to that her father could give no answer.

"God knows! We'll talk the matter over, no doubt, she and I, this evening at dinner. I don't know her views except that she was, some years ago, opposed to divorce on principle. I don't know what she wants. I shall have to find out, and then we can come to an understanding. Your idea of my leaving the matter in a lawyer's hands and bolting away to Florida wouldn't quite have done, you know. One can't run away."

He seemed slightly to square his shoulders as he uttered this martial sentiment, and Diana looked up at him with a mingled affection and pity. He had brief periods of not liking to confess himself a weakling; and if it pleased him to imagine, for the moment, that he was a match for that smiling, alert lady at the Lorraine, Diana wouldn't, for anything, question or damage the picture. Let him get what satisfaction he might out of it!

The next instalment of *The Twin Sisters* will appear in the February issue.

This Month's Picture—Enlarged

Baby Mine is the title of this month's cover, painted by **Harrison Fisher**, and we consider it the most appealing picture he has ever painted for us.

As it appears on the magazine, with the gold frame and flowered background, it makes a most attractive cover, but we have felt that our customers would prefer it for framing purposes if reproduced without the frame and in larger size. Mr. Fisher, therefore, has kindly consented to our enlarging the picture, so that it may be reproduced in the usual size and form, the frame and background being entirely omitted. This has entailed extra preparation, and, as a result, it is possible that those who do not order promptly may experience some delay in getting their orders filled; so, if you desire to receive your copy before the holidays, you must order at once.

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New York City



DRAWN BY WILL FOSTER

He was ready in a moment to be driven in Miss Euston's car to the hospital

The Treasure-Train

A great war like the present conflict in Europe may fill the combatants with strong and sublime emotions, but such is not the fact when, as must happen in certain directions, the chance for pecuniary profit out of the terrible slaughter presents itself. A decided weakening of man's moral nature is then often observed. Such is the case in this exciting story where a brave and determined girl, with the aid of Craig Kennedy, is able to thwart a cleverly planned crime which centers around a situation brought about by the war, and which men of hitherto good reputation have been weak enough to attempt to commit.

By Arthur B. Reeve

Author of "The Social Gangster," "The Voodoo Mystery," and other Craig Kennedy stories

Illustrated by Will Foster

"I AM not by nature a spy, Professor Kennedy, but—well, sometimes one is forced into something like that."

Maude Euston, who had sought out Craig in his laboratory, was a striking girl, not merely because she was pretty or because her gown was modish. Perhaps it was her sincerity and artlessness that made her attractive.

She was the daughter of Barry Euston, president of the Continental Express Company, and one could readily see why, aside from the position her father held, she should be among the most sought-after young women in the city.

Miss Euston looked straight into Kennedy's eyes as she added, without waiting for him to ask a question:

"Yesterday, I heard something that has made me think a great deal. You know, we live at the St. Germaine when we are in town. I've noticed for several months past that the lobbies are full of strange, foreign-looking people.

"Well, yesterday afternoon I was sitting alone in the tea-room of the hotel, waiting for some friends. On the other side of a huge palm I heard a couple whispering. I have seen the woman about the hotel often, though I know that she doesn't live there. The man, I don't remember ever having seen before. They mentioned the name of Granville Barnes, treasurer of father's company—"

"Is that so?" cut in Kennedy quickly. "I read the story about him in the papers this morning."

As for myself, I was instantly alive with interest, too.

Granville Barnes had been suddenly stricken while riding in his car in the country, and the report had it that he was hovering between life and death in the General Hospital. The chauffeur had been stricken, too, by the same incomprehensible malady, though apparently not so badly.

How the chauffeur managed to save the car was a miracle, but he brought it to a stop beside the road, where the two were found gasping, a quarter of an hour later, by a passing motorist, who rushed them to a doctor who had them transferred to the hospital in the city. Neither of them seemed able or willing to throw any light on what had happened.

"Just what was it you overheard?" encouraged Kennedy.

"I heard the man tell the woman," Miss Euston replied slowly, "that now was the chance—when any of the great warring powers would welcome and wink at any blow that might cripple the other to the slightest degree. I heard him say something about the Continental Express Company, and that was enough to make me listen, for, you know, father's company is handling the big shipments of gold and securities that are coming here from abroad by way of Halifax. Then I heard her mention the names of Mr. Barnes and of Mr. Lane, too, the general manager." She paused, as though not relishing the idea of having the names bandied about. "Last night the—the attack on him—

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for that is all that I can think it was—occurred."

As she stopped again, I could not help thinking what a tale of strange plotting the casual conversation suggested. New York, I knew, was full of high-class international crooks and flimflammers who had flocked there because the great field of their operations in Europe was closed. The war had literally dumped them on us. Was some one using a band of these crooks for ulterior purposes? The idea opened up wide possibilities.

"Of course," Miss Euston continued, "that is all I know; but I think I am justified in thinking that the two things—the shipment of gold here and the attack—have some connection. Oh, can't you take up the case and look into it?"

She made her appeal so winsomely that it would have been difficult to resist even if it had not promised to prove important.

"I should be glad to take up the matter," replied Craig quickly, adding, "if Mr. Barnes will let me."

"Oh, he must!" she cried. "I haven't spoken to father, but I know that he would approve of it. I know he thinks I haven't any head for business, just because I wasn't born a boy. I want to prove to him that I can protect the company's interests. And Mr. Barnes—why, of course he will approve."

She said it with an assurance that made me wonder. It was only then that I recollect that it had been one of the excuses for printing her picture in the society columns of the *Star* so often that the pretty daughter of the president of the Continental was being ardently wooed by two of the company's younger officials. Granville Barnes himself was one. The other was Rodman Lane, the young general manager. I wished now that I had paid more attention to the society news. Perhaps I should have been in a better position to judge which of them it was whom she really had chosen. As it was, two questions presented themselves to me. Was it Barnes? And had Barnes really been the victim of an attack—or of an accident?

Kennedy may have been thinking the problems over, but he gave no evidence of it. He threw on his hat and coat, and was ready in a moment to be driven in Miss Euston's car to the hospital.

There, after the usual cutting of red tape which only Miss Euston could have

accomplished, we were led by a white-uniformed nurse through the silent halls to the private room occupied by Barnes.

"It's a most peculiar case," whispered the young doctor in charge, as we paused at the door. "I want you to notice his face and his cough. His pulse seems very weak, almost imperceptible at times. The stethoscope reveals subcrepitant sounds all over his lungs. It's like bronchitis or pneumonia—but it isn't either."

We entered. Barnes was lying there almost in a state of unconsciousness. As we stood watching him, he opened his eyes. But he did not see us. His vision seemed to be riveted on Miss Euston. He murmured something that we could not catch, and, as his eyes closed again, his face seemed to relax into a peaceful expression as though he were dreaming of something happy.

Suddenly, however, the old tense lines reappeared. Another idea seemed to have been suggested.

"Is—Lane—hiring the men—himself?" he murmured.

The sight of Maude Euston had prompted the thought of his rival, now with a clear field. What did it mean? Was he jealous of Lane, or did his words have a deeper meaning? What difference could it have made if Lane had a free hand in managing the shipment of treasure for the company?

Kennedy looked long and carefully at the face of the sick man. It was blue and cyanosed still, and his lips had a violet tinge. Barnes had been coughing a great deal. Now and then his mouth was flecked with foamy blood, which the nurse wiped gently away. Kennedy picked up a piece of the blood-soaked gauze.

A moment later we withdrew from the room as quietly as we had entered and tiptoed down the hall, Miss Euston and the young doctor following us more slowly. As we reached the door, I turned to see where she was. A distinguished-looking elderly gentleman, sitting in the waiting-room, had happened to glance up as she passed and had moved quickly to the hall.

"What—you here, Maude?" we heard him say.

"Yes, father; I thought I might be able to do something for Granville."

She accompanied the remark with a sidelong glance and nod at us, which Kennedy interpreted to mean that we might as well keep in the background. Euston



It was something even to have
a chance to talk with a girl
like Maude Euston

himself, far from chiding her, seemed rather to be pleased than otherwise. We could not hear all they said, but one sentence was wafted over.

"It's most unfortunate, Maude, at just this time. It leaves the whole matter in the hands of Lane."

At the mention of Lane, which her father accompanied by a keen glance, she flushed a little and bit her lip. I wondered whether it meant more than that, of the two suitors, her father obviously preferred Barnes.

Euston had called to see Barnes, and, as the doctor led him up the hall again, Miss Euston rejoined us.

"You need not drive us back," thanked Kennedy. "Just drop us at the subway. I'll let you know the moment I have arrived at any conclusion."

On the train we happened to run across a former classmate, Morehead, who had gone into the brokerage business.

"Queer about that Barnes case, isn't it?" suggested Kennedy, after the usual greetings were over. Then, without suggesting that we were more than casually interested, "What does the Street think of it?"

"It is queer," rejoined Morehead. "All the boys down-town are talking about it—wondering how it will affect the transit of

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the gold shipments. I don't know what would happen if there should be a hitch. But they ought to be able to run the thing through all right."

"It's a pretty ticklish piece of business, then?" I suggested.

"Well, you know the state of the market just now—a little push one way or the other means a lot. And I suppose you know that the insiders on the Street have boosted Continental Express up until it is practically one of the 'war-stocks,' too. Well, good-by—here's my station."

We had scarcely returned to the laboratory, however, when a car drove up furiously and a young man hustled in to see us.

"You do not know me," he introduced, "but I am Rodman Lane, general manager of the Continental Express. You know, our company has had charge of the big shipments of gold and securities to New York. I suppose you've read about what happened to Barnes, our treasurer. I don't know anything about it—haven't even time to find out. All I know is that it puts more work on me, and I'm nearly crazy already."

I watched him narrowly.

"We've had little trouble of any kind so far," he hurried on, "until just now I learned that all the roads over which we are likely to send the shipment have been finding many more broken rails than usual."

Kennedy had been following him keenly.

"I should like to see some samples of them," he observed.

"You would?" said Lane eagerly. "I've a couple of sections sawed from rails down at my office, where I asked the officials to send them."

We made a hurried trip down to the express company's office.

Kennedy examined the sections of rails minutely with a strong pocket-lens.

"No ordinary break," he commented. "You can see that it was an explosive that was used—an explosive well and properly tamped down with wet clay. Without tamping, the rails would have been bent, not broken."

"Done by wreckers, then?" Lane asked.

"Certainly not defective rails," replied Kennedy. "Still, I don't think you need worry so much about them for the next train. You know what to guard against. Having been discovered, whoever they are, they'll probably not try it again. It's

some new wrinkle that must be guarded against."

It was small comfort, but Craig was accustomed to being brutally frank.

"Have you taken any other precautions now that you didn't take before?"

"Yes," replied Lane slowly; "the railroad has been experimenting with wireless on its trains. We have placed wireless on ours, too. They can't cut us off by cutting wires. Then, of course, as before, we shall use a pilot-train to run ahead and a strong guard on the train itself. But now I feel that there may be something else that we can do. So I have come to you."

"When does the next shipment start?" asked Kennedy.

"To-morrow, from Halifax."

Kennedy appeared to be considering something.

"The trouble," he said, at length, "is likely to be at this end. Perhaps before the train starts something may happen that will tell us just what additional measures to take as it approaches New York."

While Kennedy was at work with the blood-soaked gauze that he had taken from Barnes, I could do nothing but try to place the relative positions of the various actors in the little drama that was unfolding. Lane himself puzzled me. Sometimes I felt almost sure that he knew that Miss Euston had come to Kennedy, and that he was trying, in this way, to keep in touch with what was being done for Barnes.

Some things I knew already. Barnes was comparatively wealthy, and had evidently the stamp of approval of Maude Euston's father. As for Lane, he was far from wealthy, although ambitious.

The company was in a delicate situation where an act of omission would count for as much as an act of commission. Whoever could foresee what was going to happen might capitalize that information for much money. If there was a plot and Barnes had been the victim, what was its nature? I recalled Miss Euston's overheard conversation in the tea-room. Both names had been mentioned. In short, I soon found myself wondering whether some one might not have tempted Lane either to do or not to do something.

"I wish you'd go over to the St. Germaine, Walter," remarked Kennedy, at length, looking up from his work. "Don't tell Miss

Euston of Lane's visit. But ask her if she will keep an eye out for that woman she heard talking—and the man, too. They may drop in again. And tell her that if she hears anything else, no matter how trivial, about Barnes, she must let me know."

I was glad of the commission. Not only had I been unable to arrive anywhere in my conjectures but it was something even to have a chance to talk with a girl like Maude Euston.

Fortunately I found her at home and, though she was rather disappointed that I had nothing to report, she received me graciously, and we spent the rest of the evening watching the varied life of the fashionable hostelry in the hope of chancing on the holders of the strange conversation in the tea-room.

Once in a while an idea would occur to her of some one who was in a position to keep her informed if anything further happened to Barnes, and she would despatch a messenger with a little note. Finally, as it grew late and the adventuress of the tea-room episode seemed unlikely to favor the St. Germaine with her presence again that night, I made my excuses, having had the satisfaction only of having delivered Kennedy's message without accomplishing anything more. In fact, I was still unable to determine whether there was any sentiment stronger than sympathy that had prompted her to come to Kennedy about Barnes. As for Lane, his name was scarcely mentioned except when it was necessary.

It was early the next morning that I rejoined Craig at the laboratory. I found him studying the solution which he had extracted from the blood-soaked gauze after first removing the blood in a little distilled water.

Before him was his new spectroscope, and I could see that now he was satisfied with what the uncannily delicate light-detective had told him. He pricked his finger and let a drop of blood fall into a little fresh distilled water, some of which he placed in the spectroscope.

"Look through it," he said. "Blood diluted with water shows the well-known dark bands between D and E, known as the oxyhemoglobin absorption." I looked as he indicated and saw the dark bands. "Now," he went on, "I add some of this other liquid."

He picked up a bottle of something with a faint greenish tinge.

"See the bands gradually fade?"

I watched, and indeed they did diminish in intensity and finally disappear, leaving an uninterrupted and brilliant spectrum.

"My spectroscope," he said simply, "shows that the blood-crystals of Barnes are colorless. Barnes was poisoned—by some gas, I think. I wish I had time to hunt along the road where the accident took place." As he said it, he walked over and drew from a cabinet several peculiar arrangements made of gauze.

He was about to say something more when there came a knock at the door. Kennedy shoved the gauze arrangements into his pocket and opened it. It was Maude Euston, breathless and agitated.

"Oh, Mr. Kennedy, have you heard?" she cried. "You asked me to keep a watch whether anything more happened to Mr. Barnes. So I asked some friends of his to let me know of anything. He has a yacht, the Sea Gull, which has been lying off City Island. Well, last night the captain received a message to go to the hospital, that Mr. Barnes wanted to see him. Of course it was a fake. Mr. Barnes was too sick to see anybody on business. But when the captain got back, he found that, on one pretext or another, the crew had been got ashore—and the Sea Gull is gone—stolen! Some men in a small boat must have overpowered the engineer. Anyhow, she has disappeared. I know that no one could expect to steal a yacht—at least for very long. She'd be recognized soon. But they must know that, too."

Kennedy looked at his watch.

"It is only a few hours since the train started from Halifax," he considered. "It will be due in New York early to-morrow morning—twenty million dollars in gold and thirty millions in securities—a seven-car steel train, with forty armed guards!"

"I know it," she said anxiously, "and I am so afraid something is going to happen—ever since I had to play the spy. But what could anyone want with a yacht?"

Kennedy shrugged his shoulders non-committally.

"It is one of the things that Mr. Lane must guard against," he remarked simply.

She looked up quickly.

"Mr. Lane?" she repeated.

"Yes," replied Kennedy; "the protection of the train has fallen on him. I shall meet the train myself when it gets to Worcester

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and come in on it. I don't think there can be any danger before it reaches that point."

"Will Mr. Lane go with you?"

"He must," decided Kennedy. "That train must be delivered safely here in this city."

Maude Euston gave Craig one of her penetrating, direct looks.

"You think there is danger, then?"

"I cannot say," he replied.

"Then I am going with you!" she exclaimed.

Kennedy paused and met her eyes. I do not know whether he read what was back of her sudden decision. At least I could not, unless there was something about Rodman Lane which she wished to have cleared up. Kennedy seemed to read her character and know that a girl like Maude Euston would be a help in any emergency.

"Very well," he agreed; "meet us at Mr. Lane's office in half an hour. Walter, see whether you can find Whiting."

Whiting was one of Kennedy's students with whom he had been lately conducting some experiments. I hurried out and managed to locate him.

"What is it you suspect?" I asked, when we returned. "A wreck—some spectacular stroke at the nations that are shipping the gold?"

"Perhaps," he replied absently, as he and Whiting hurriedly assembled some parts of instruments that were on a table in an adjoining room.

"Perhaps?" I repeated. "What else might there be?"

"Robbery."

"Robbery!" I exclaimed. "Of twenty million dollars? Why, man, just consider the mere weight of the metal!"

"That's all very well," he replied, warming up a bit as he saw that Whiting was getting things together quickly. "But it needs only a bit of twenty millions to make a snug fortune—" He paused and straightened up as the gathering of the peculiar electrical apparatus, whatever it was, was completed. "And," he went on quickly, "consider the effect on the stock-market of the news. That's the big thing."

I could only gasp,

"A modern train-robbery, planned in the heart of dense traffic!"

"Why not?" he queried. "Nothing is impossible if you can only take the other

fellow unawares. Our job is not to be taken unawares. Are you ready, Whiting?"

"Yes, sir," replied the student, shouldering the apparatus, for which I was very thankful, for my arms had frequently ached carrying about some of Kennedy's weird but often weighty apparatus.

We piled into a taxi-cab and made a quick journey to the office of the Continental Express. Maude Euston had already preceded us, and we found her standing by Lane's desk as he paced the floor.

"Please, Miss Euston, don't go," he was saying as we entered.

"But I want to go," she persisted, more than ever determined, apparently.

"I have engaged Professor Kennedy just for the purpose of foreseeing what new attack can be made on us," he said.

"You have engaged Professor Kennedy?" she asked. "I think I have a prior claim there, haven't I?" she appealed.

Kennedy stood for a moment looking from one to the other. What was there in the motives that actuated them? Was it fear, hate, love, jealousy?

"I can serve my two clients only if they yield to me," Craig remarked quietly. "Don't set that down, Whiting. Which is it—yes or no?"

Neither Lane nor Miss Euston looked at each other for a moment.

"Is it in my hands?" repeated Craig.

"Yes," bit off Lane sourly.

"And you, Miss Euston?"

"Of course," she answered.

"Then we all go," decided Craig. "Lane, may I install this thing in your telegraph-room outside?"

"Anything you say," Lane returned, unmollified.

Whiting set to work immediately, while Kennedy gave him the final instructions.

Neither Lane nor Miss Euston spoke a word, even when I left the room for a moment, fearing that there was a crowd. I could not help wondering whether she might not have heard something more from the woman in the tea-room conversation than she had told us. If she had, she had been more frank with Lane than with us. She must have told him. Certainly she had not told us. It was the only way I could account for the armed truce that seemed to exist as, hour after hour, our train carried us nearer the point where we were to meet the treasure-train.



"Please, Miss Euston, don't go," he was saying as we entered.
"But I want to go," she persisted

At Worcester we had still a long wait for the argosy that was causing so much anxiety and danger. It was long after the time scheduled that we left finally, on our return journey, late at night.

Ahead of us went a dummy pilot-train to be sacrificed if any bridges or trestles were blown up or if any new attempts were made

at producing artificially broken rails. We four established ourselves as best we could in a car in the center of the treasure-train, with one of the armed guards as company. Mile after mile we reeled off, ever southward and westward.

We must have crossed the state of Connecticut and have been approaching

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Long Island Sound, when suddenly the train stopped with a jerk. Ordinarily there is nothing to grow alarmed about at the mere stopping of a train. But this was an unusual train under unusual circumstances.

No one said a word as we peered out. Down the track the signals seemed to show a clear road. What was the matter?

"Look!" exclaimed Kennedy suddenly.

Off a distance ahead, I could see what looked like a long row of white fuses sticking up in the faint starlight. From them the fresh west wind seemed to blow a thick curtain of greenish-yellow smoke which swept across the track enveloping the engine and the forward cars and now advancing toward us like the "yellow wind" of northern China. It seemed to spread thickly on the ground, rising scarcely more than sixteen or eighteen feet.

A moment, and the cloud began to fill the air about us. There was a paralyzing odor. I looked about at the others, gasping and coughing. As the cloud rolled on, inexorably increasing in density, it seemed literally to grip the lungs.

It flashed over me that already the engineer and fireman had been overcome, though not before the engineer had been able to stop the train.

As the cloud advanced, the armed guards ran from it, shouting, one now and then falling overcome. For the moment, none of us knew what to do. Should we run and desert the train for which we had dared so much? To stay was death.

Quickly Kennedy pulled from his pocket the gauze arrangements he had had in his hand that morning just as Miss Euston's knock had interrupted his conversation with me. Hurriedly he shoved one into Miss Euston's hands, then to Lane, then to me, and to the guard who was with us.

"Wet them!" he cried, as he fitted his own over his nose and staggered to a water-cooler.

"What is it?" I gasped hoarsely, as we all imitated his every action.

"Chlorin gas," he rasped back, "the same gas that overcame Granville Barnes. These masks are impregnated with a glycerin solution of sodium phosphate. It was chlorin that destroyed the red coloring matter in Barnes's blood. No wonder, when this action of just a whiff of it on us is so rapid. Even a short time longer, and death would follow. It destroys without

the possibility of reconstitution, and it leaves a dangerous deposit of albumin. How do you feel?"

"All right," I lied.

We looked out again. The things that looked like fuses were not bombs, as I had expected, but big reenforced bottles of gas compressed at high pressure, with the taps open. The supply was not inexhaustible. In fact, it was decidedly limited. But it seemed to have been calculated to a nicety to do the work. Only the panting of the locomotive now broke the stillness, as Kennedy and I moved forward along the track.

Crack! rang out a shot.

"Get on the other side of the train—quick!" ordered Craig.

In the shadow, aside from the direction in which the wind was wafting the gas, we could now just barely discern a heavy but powerful motor-truck and figures moving about it. As I peered out from the shelter of the train, I realized what it all meant. The truck which had probably conveyed the gas-tanks from the rendezvous where they had been collected was there now to convey to some dark wharf what of the treasure could be seized. There the stolen yacht was waiting to carry it off.

"Don't move—don't fire," cautioned Kennedy. "Perhaps they will think it was only a shadow they saw. Let them act first. They must. They haven't any too much time. Let them get impatient."

For some minutes we waited.

Sure enough, separated widely, but converging toward the treasure-train at last, we could see several dark figures making their way from the road across a strip of field and over the rails.

I made a move with my gun.

"Don't," whispered Kennedy. "Let them get together."

His ruse was clever. Evidently they thought that it had been indeed a wraith at which they had fired. Swiftly now they hurried to the nearest of the gold-laden cars. We could hear them breaking in where the guards had either been rendered unconscious or had fled.

I looked around at Maude Euston. She was the calmest of us all, as she whispered:

"They are in the car. Can't we do something?"

"Lane," whispered Kennedy, "crawl through under the trucks with me. Walter,



DRAWN BY WILL FORTNER

Crack! rang out a shot. "Get on the other side of the train—quick!" ordered Craig

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and you, Dugan," he added, to the guard, "go down the other side. We must rush them—in the car."

As Kennedy crawled under the train again, I saw Maude Euston follow Lane closely.

How it happened, I cannot describe, for the simple reason that I don't remember. I know that it was a short, sharp dash, that the fight was a fight of fists in which guns were discharged wildly in the air against the will of the gunner. But from the moment when Kennedy's voice rang out in the door, "Hands up!" to the time that I saw that we had the robbers lined up with their backs against the heavy cases of the precious metal for which they had planned and risked so much, it is a blank of grim death-struggle.

I remember my surprise at seeing one of them a woman, and I thought I must be mistaken. I looked about. No; there was Maude Euston standing just beside Lane.

I think it must have been that which recalled me and made me realize that it was a reality and not a dream. The two women stood glaring at each other.

"The woman in the tea-room!" exclaimed Miss Euston. "It was about this—robbery—then, that I heard you talking the other afternoon."

I looked at the face before me. It was, had been, a handsome face. But now it was cold and hard, with that heartless expression of the adventuress. The men seemed to take their plight hard. But, as she looked into the clear, gray eyes of the other woman, the adventuress seemed to gain rather than lose in defiance.

"Robbery?" she repeated bitterly. "This is only a beginning."

"A beginning—what do you mean?"

It was Lane who spoke. Slowly she turned toward him.

"You know well enough what I mean."

The implication that she intended was clear. She had addressed the remark to him, but it was a stab at Maude Euston.

"I know only what you wanted me to do—and I refused. Is there more still?"

I wondered whether Lane could really have been involved.

"Quick—what *do* you mean?" demanded Kennedy authoritatively.

The woman turned to him.

"Suppose this news of the robbery is out? What will happen? Do you want me to tell

you, young lady?" she added, turning again to Maude Euston. "I'll tell you. The stock of the Continental Express Company will fall like a house of cards. And then? Those who have sold it at the top price will buy it back again at the bottom. The company is sound. The depression will not last—perhaps will be over in a day, a week, a month. Then the operators can send it up again. Don't you see? It is the old method of manipulation in a new form. It is a war-stock gamble. Other stocks will be affected the same way. This is our reward—what we can get out of it by playing this game for which the materials are furnished free. We have played it—and lost. The manipulators will get their reward on the stock-market this morning. But they must still reckon with us—even if we have lost."

She said it with a sort of grim humor.

"And you have put Granville Barnes out of the way, first?" I asked, remembering the chlorin. She laughed shrilly.

"That was an accident—his own carelessness. He was carrying a tank of it for us. Only his chauffeur's presence of mind in throwing it into the shrubbery by the road saved his life and reputation. No, young man; he was one of the manipulators, too. But the chief of them was—" She paused as if to enjoy one brief moment of triumph at least. "The president of the company," she added.

"No, no, no!" cried Maude Euston.

"Yes, yes, yes! He does not dare deny it. They were all in it."

"Mrs. Labret—you lie," towered Lane, in a surging passion, as he stepped forward and shook his finger at her. "You lie and you know it. There is an old saying about the fury of a woman scorned."

She paid no attention to him whatever.

"Maude Euston," she hissed, as though Lane had been as inarticulate as the boxes of gold about, "you have saved your lover's reputation—perhaps. At least, the shipment is safe. But you have ruined your father. The deal will go through. Already that has been arranged. You may as well tell Kennedy to let us go and let the thing go through. It involves more than us."

Kennedy had been standing back a bit, carefully keeping them all covered. He glanced a moment out of the corner of his eye at Maude Euston, but said nothing.

It was a terrible situation. Had Lane

really been in it? That question was overshadowed by the mention of her father.

Impulsively she turned to Craig.

"Oh, save him!" she cried. "Can't anything be done to save my father in spite of himself?"

"It is too late," mocked Mrs. Labret. "People will read the account of the robbery in the papers, even if it didn't take place. They will see it before they see a denial. Orders will flood in to sell the stock. No; it can't be stopped."

Kennedy glanced momentarily at me.

"Is there still time to catch the last morning edition of the *Star*, Walter?" he asked quietly. I glanced at my watch.

"We may try. It's possible."

"Write a despatch—an accident to the engine—train delayed—now proceeding—anything. Here, Dugan, you keep them covered. Shoot to kill if there's a move."

Kennedy had begun feverishly setting up the part of the apparatus which he had brought after Whiting had set up his.

"What can you do?" hissed Mrs. Labret. "You can't get word through. Orders have been issued that the telegraph operators are under no circumstances to give out news about this train. The wireless is out of commission, too—the operator overcome. The robbery story has been prepared and given out by this time. Already reporters are being assigned to follow it up."

I looked over at Kennedy. If orders had been given for such secrecy by Barry Euston, how could my despatch do any good? It would be held back by the operators.

Craig quickly slung a wire over those by the side of the track and seized what I had written, sending furiously.

"What are you doing?" I asked. "You heard what she said."

"One thing you can be certain of," he answered: "That despatch can never be stolen or tapped by spies."

"Why—what is this?" I asked, pointing to the instrument.

"The invention of Major Squier, of the army," he replied, "by which any number of messages may be sent at the same time over the same wire without the slightest conflict. Really it consists in making wireless electric waves travel along, instead of inside, the wire. In other words, he has discovered the means of concentrating the energy of a wireless wave on a given point

instead of letting it riot all over the face of the earth.

"It is the principle of wireless. But in ordinary wireless less than one-millionth part of the original sending force reaches the point for which it is intended. The rest is scattered through space in all directions. If the vibrations of a current are of a certain number per second, the current will follow a wire to which it is, as it were, attached, instead of passing off into space.

"All the energy in wireless formerly wasted in radiation in every direction now devotes itself solely to driving the current through the ether about the wire. Thus it goes until it reaches the point where Whiting is—where the vibrations correspond to its own and are in tune. There it reproduces the sending impulse. It is wired wireless."

Craig had long since finished sending his wired wireless message. We waited impatiently. The seconds seemed to drag like hours.

Far off, now, we could hear a whistle as a train finally approached slowly into our block, creeping up to see what was wrong. But that made no difference now. It was not any help they could give us that we wanted. A greater problem, the saving of one man's name and the reestablishment of another, confronted us.

Unexpectedly the little wired wireless instrument before us began to buzz. Quickly Kennedy seized a pencil and wrote as the message that no hand of man could interfere with was flashed back to us.

"It is for you, Walter, from the *Star*," he said, simply handing me what he had written on the back of an old envelop.

I read, almost afraid to read:

Robbery story killed. Black type across page-head last edition, "Treasure-train safe!"

McGRATH.

"Show it to Miss Euston," Craig added simply, gathering up his wired wireless set, just as the crew from the train behind us ran up. "She may like to know that she has saved her father from himself through misunderstanding her lover."

I thought Maude Euston would faint as she clutched the message. Lane caught her as she reeled backward.

"Rodman—can you—forgive me?" she murmured simply, yielding to him and looking up into his face.

The next *Craig Kennedy* story will be *The Truth-Detector*.



DRAWN BY HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY

"Kiss me, Dick," she said, and afterward. "This is not a—love-touch." Her voice had become suddenly husky. "It's just in case I do decide to—to go

THE LITTLE LADY OF THE BIG HOUSE

A STORY OF THREE PEOPLE IN A REAL WORLD

By Jack London

Author of "The Valley of the Moon," "Smoke Bellew," "The Sea Wolf," etc.

Illustrated by Howard Chandler Christy

SYNOPSIS—Dick Forrest, the son of a California pioneer, is the owner of a model farm and ranch in the Sacramento valley, California, splendidly organized and managed by experts in every department. After he has acquired it at the age of twenty-one and built the Big House for a home, he leaves the domain in the hands of his managers and travels for four years, having many remarkable adventures. At thirty, he is back with a wife—"The Little Lady of the Big House." She is Paula Desten, the daughter of a comrade of Dick's father in the "gold days" of California.

After ten years of married life, a suspicion crosses Dick's mind that Paula, who is a remarkable woman, excelling in sports, a talented musician and artist, and possessing great social charm, is not entirely happy. He is so absorbed in the management of the ranch and its conduct at maximum efficiency that he probably does not give her all her passionate nature craves. But he does not believe that she can be lonely. Her half-sisters, Ernestine and Lute, are at the Big House much of the time, and, besides being the gathering-place for all who live in the neighborhood, it is rarely without guests. For some time, one of these has been Evan Graham, an American of roving description whom Dick and Paula had met on a trip to South America two years before.

A strong admiration for his hostess on the part of Evan quickly ripens into deeper feelings, and then Paula realizes that she, too, is in love with her husband's friend. Out of loyalty to Dick, Graham believes that he should leave, but finds that he cannot. The attraction of Paula for Graham does not pass unnoticed by Dick, but he dismisses any uneasy feeling that arises by the reflection that he and Paula have been happily married for ten years. Moreover, it is his creed that there is no fairness or satisfaction in a man's holding a woman a moment longer than she loves to be held. Finally, Graham wants to go with the tale of his great love straight to Dick who, if he lives up to his theories, will give his wife her freedom. But Paula objects. She declares that she loves both men (which Graham says is impossible), but in Dick's case she may have mistaken the fondness of affection for love. As for Graham, he has swept her as Dick never had. One night, when many guests are present and a joyful party is in progress, Dick observes Paula kiss Graham. The sight completely unnerves him, and his friends see that he has had a great shock. But he manages to pass the matter off with a trumped-up explanation, and proposes a hunt for mountain-lions the next day. Paula, Evan, and two old friends of Dick's, Martinez and Froelig, a painter and a sculptor, will share the sport. Just before retiring, Ernestine goes to Dick and says that she knows he is in trouble and asks what she can do. He puts her off by saying that he will arrange to have her and her sister leave the following morning, and then goes to look at one of his finest mares, which is sick.

On the way back from the sick mare, Dick paused once to listen to the restless stamp of the Mountain Lad and his fellows in the stallion-barn.

In the quiet air, from somewhere up the hills, came the ringing of a single bell from some grazing animal. A cat-paw of breeze fanned him with sudden, balmy warmth. All the night was balmy with the faint and almost aromatic scent of ripening grain and drying grass. The stallion stamped again, and Dick, with a

deep breath and realization that never had he more loved it all, looked up and circled the sky-line where the crests of the mountains blotted the field of stars.

"No, Cato," he mused aloud; "one cannot agree with you. Man does not depart from life as from an inn. He departs as from a dwelling, the one dwelling he will ever know. He departs—nowhere. It is good-night. For him, the Noseless One—and the dark."

He made as if to start, but once again the stamp of the stallions held him, and the

The Little Lady of the Big House

hillside bell rang out. He drew a deep inhalation through his nostrils of the air of balm, and loved it, and loved the fair land of his devising.

"I looked into time and saw none of me there," he quoted, then capped it, smiling, with a second quotation: "'She gat me nine great sons. The other nine were daughters.'"

Back at the house, he did not immediately go in but stood a space, gazing at the far-flung lines of it. Nor, inside, did he immediately go to his own quarters. Instead, he wandered through the silent rooms, across the patios, and along the dim-lit halls. His frame of mind was as of one about to depart on a journey. He pressed on the lights in Paula's fairy patio, and, sitting in an austere Roman seat of marble, smoked a cigarette quite through while he made his plans.

Oh, he would do it nicely enough! He could pull off a hunting-accident that would fool the world. Trust him not to bungle it. Next day would be the day, in the woods above Sycamore Creek. Grandfather Jonathan Forrest, the strait-laced Puritan, had died of a hunting-accident. For the first time, Dick doubted that accident. Well, if it hadn't been an accident, the old fellow had done it well. It had never been hinted in the family that it was aught but an accident.

His hand on the button to turn off the lights, Dick delayed a moment for a last look at the marble babies that played in the fountain and among the roses.

"So long, younglings!" he called softly to them. "You're the nearest I ever came to it."

From his sleeping-porch he looked across the big patio to Paula's porch. There was no light. The chance was she slept.

On the edge of the bed, he found himself with one shoe unlaced, and, smiling at his absentness, relaxed it. What need was there for him to sleep? It was already four in the morning. He would at least watch his last sunrise. Last things were coming fast. Already had he not dressed for the last time? And the bath of the previous morning would be his last. Mere water could not stay the corruption of death. He would have to shave, however—a last vanity, for the hair did continue to grow for a time on dead men's faces.

He brought a copy of his will from the

wall safe to his desk and read it carefully. Several minor codicils suggested themselves, and he wrote them out in longhand, pre-dating them six months as a precaution. The last was the endowment of the sages of the madroño grove with a fellowship of seven.

He ran through his life-insurance policies, verifying the permitted suicide-clause in each one; signed the tray of letters that had waited his signature since the previous morning, and dictated a letter into the phonograph to the publisher of his books. His desk cleaned, he scrawled a quick summary of income and expense, with all earnings from the Harvest mines deducted. He transposed the summary into a second summary, increasing the expense-margins, and cutting down the income-items to an absurdly least possible. Still, the result was satisfactory.

He tore up the sheets of figures and wrote out a program for the future handling of the Harvest situation. He did it sketchily, with casual tentativeness, so that, when it was found among his papers, there would be no suspicion. In the same fashion he worked out a line-breeding program for a score of years for the 'Shires, and an in-breeding table, up and down, for the Mountain Lad and the Fotherington Princess and certain selected individuals of their progeny.

When Oh My came in with coffee at six, Dick was on his last paragraph of his scheme for rice growing.

"Although the Italian rice may be worth experimenting with for quick maturity," he wrote, "I shall, for a time, confine the main plantings in equal proportions to Moti, Ioko, and the Wateribune. Thus, with different times of maturing, the same crews and same machinery, with the same overhead, can work a larger acreage than if only one variety is planted."

Oh My served the coffee at his desk and made no sign, even after a glance to the porch at the bed which had not been slept in—all of which control Dick permitted himself privily to admire.

At six-thirty, the telephone-bell rang, and he heard Hennessy's tired voice.

"I knew you'd be up and glad to know Alden Bessie's pulled through. It was a squeak, though. And now it's me for the hay."

When Dick had shaved, he looked at

the shower, hesitated a moment; then his face set stubbornly. "I'm darned if I will," was his thought; "a sheer waste of time." He did, however, change his shoes to a pair of heavy, high-laced ones fit for the roughness of hunting.

He was at his desk again, looking over the notes in his scribble-pads for the morning's work, when Paula entered. She did not call her "Good-morning, merry gentleman!" but came quite close to him before she greeted him softly with,

"The Acorn-planter—ever-tireless, never-weary Red Cloud."

He noted the violet-blue shadows under her eyes, as he arose without offering to touch her. Nor did she offer invitation.

"A white night?" he asked, as he placed a chair.

"A white night," she answered wearily. "Not a second's sleep, though I tried so hard."

Both were reluctant of speech, and they labored under a mutual inability to draw their eyes away from each other.

"You—you don't look any too fit yourself," she said.

"Yes, my face," he nodded; "I was looking at it while I shaved. The expression won't come off."

"Something happened to you last night," she probed, and he could not fail to see the same compassion in her eyes that he had seen in Oh Dear's. "Everybody remarked your expression. What was it?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"It has been coming on for some time," he evaded, remembering that the first hint of it had been given him by Paula's portrait of him. "You've noticed it?" he inquired casually.

She nodded, then was struck by a sudden thought. He saw the idea leap to life ere her words uttered it.

"Dick, you haven't an affair?"

It was a way out. It would straighten all the tangle. And hope was in her voice and in her face. He smiled, shook his head slowly, and watched her disappointment.

"I take it back," he said; "I have an affair."

"Of the heart?"

She was eager as he answered,
"Of the heart."

But she was not prepared for what came next. He abruptly drew his chair close till his knees touched hers, and, leaning

forward, quickly but gently prisoned her hands in his, resting on her knees.

"Don't be alarmed, little bird-woman," he quieted her; "I shall not kiss you. It is a long time since I have. I want to tell you about that affair. But, first, I want to tell you how proud I am—proud of myself. I am proud that I am a lover. At my age, a lover! It is unbelievable, and it is wonderful. And such a lover! Such a curious, unusual, and quite altogether remarkable lover! In fact, I have laughed all the books and all biology in the face. I am a monogamist. I love the woman, the one woman. After ten years of possession I love her quite madly—oh, so sweetly madly!" Her hands communicated her disappointment to him, making a slight, impulsive flutter to escape; but he held them more firmly. "I know her every weakness and, weakness and strength and all, I love her as madly as I loved her at the first, in those mad moments when I first held her in my arms."

Her hands were mutinous of the restraint he put upon them, and unconsciously she was beginning to pull and tug to be away from him. Also, there was fear in her eyes. He knew her fastidiousness, and he guessed, with the other man's lips recent on hers, that she feared a more ardent expression on his part.

"And please, please be not frightened, timid, sweet, beautiful, proud, little bird-woman! See—I release you! Know that I love you most dearly, and that I am considering you as well as myself, and before myself, all the while." He drew his chair away from her, leaned back, and saw confidence grow in her eyes. "I shall tell you all my heart," he continued, "and I shall want you to tell me all your heart."

"This love for me is something new?" she asked. "A recrudescence?"

"Yes, a recrudescence, and no."

"I thought that, for a long time, I had been a habit to you," she said.

"But I was loving you all the time."

"Not madly."

"No," he acknowledged; "but with certainty. I was so sure of you, of myself. It was, to me, all a permanent and forever established thing. I plead guilty. But when that permanency was shaken, all my love for you fired up. It was there all the time, a steady, long-married flame."

"But about me?" she demanded.

"That is what we are coming to. I know

your worry right now, and of a minute ago. You are so intrinsically honest, so intrinsically true, that the thought of sharing two men is abhorrent to you. I have not misread you. It is a long time since you have permitted me any love-touch"—he shrugged his shoulders—"and an equally long time since I offered you a love-touch."

"Then you *have* known from the first?" she asked quickly.

He nodded.

"Possibly," he added, with an air of judicious weighing, "I sensed it coming before even you knew it. But we will not go into that or other things."

"You have seen—" she attempted to ask, stung almost to shame at thought of her husband having witnessed any caress of hers and Graham's.

"We will not demean ourselves with details, Paula. Besides, there was, and is, nothing wrong about any of it. Also, it was not necessary for me to see anything. I have my memories of when I, too, kissed stolen kisses in the pause of the second between the frank, outspoken good-nights. When all the signs of ripeness are visible—the love-shades and love-notes that cannot be hidden, the unconscious caress of the eyes in a fleeting glance, the involuntary softening of voices, the cuckoo-sob in the throat—why, the night parting kiss does not need to be seen. It has to be. Still further, my woman, know that I justify you in everything."

"It—it was not ever—much," she faltered.

"I should have been surprised if it had been. It couldn't have been you. As it is, I have been surprised. After our ten years, it was unexpected—"

"Dick," she interrupted him, leaning toward him and searching him. She paused to frame her thought, and then went on with directness. "In our ten years, will you say it has never been any more with you?"

"I have told you that I justify you in everything," he softened his reply.

"But you have not answered my question," she insisted. "Oh, I do not mean mere flirtatious passages, bits of primrose philandering! I mean unfaithfulness, and I mean it technically. In the past, you have?"

"In the past," he answered, "not much, and not for a long, long time."

"I often wondered," she mused.

"And I have told you I justify you in everything," he reiterated. "And now you know where lies the justification."

"Then, by the same token, I had a similar right," she said. "Though I haven't, Dick, I haven't," she hastened to add. "Well, anyway, you always did preach the single standard."

"Alas, not any longer," he smiled. "One's imagination will conjure, and, in the past few weeks, I've been forced to change my mind."

"You mean that you demand I must be faithful?"

He nodded and said,

"So long as you live with me."

"But where's the equity?"

"There isn't any equity." He shook his head. "Oh, I know it seems a preposterous change of view. But, at this late day, I have made the discovery of the ancient truth that women are different from men. All I have learned of book and theory goes glimmering before the everlasting fact that the women are the mothers of our children. I—I still had my hopes of children with you, you see. But that's all over and done with. The question now is: What's in your heart? I have told you mine. And afterward we can determine what is to be done."

"Oh, Dick," she breathed, after silence had grown painful, "I do love you; I shall always love you! You are my Red Cloud. Why, do you know, only yesterday, out on your sleeping-porch, I turned my face to the wall. It was terrible. It didn't seem right. I turned it out again—oh, so quickly!"

He lighted a cigarette and waited.

"But you have not told me what is in your heart—all of it," he chided finally.

"I do love you," she repeated.

"And Evan?"

"That is different. It is horrible to have to talk this way to you. Besides, I don't know. I can't make up my mind what is in my heart."

"Love? Or amorous adventure? It must be one or the other."

She shook her head.

"Can't you understand," she asked, "that I don't understand? You see, I am a woman. I have never sown any wild oats. And now that all this has happened, I don't know what to make of it. Shaw and the rest must be right. Women are

hunting animals. You are both big game. I can't help it. It is a challenge to me. And I find I am a puzzle to myself. All my concepts have been toppled over by my conduct. I want you. I want Evan. I want both of you. It is not amorous adventure—oh, believe me! And if, by any chance, it is, and I do not know it—no, it isn't; I know it isn't."

"Then it is love."

"But I do love you, Red Cloud!"

"And you say you love him. You can't love both of us."

"But I can; I do. I do love both of you—oh, I am straight! I shall be straight. I must work this out. I thought you might help me. That is why I came to you this morning. There must be some solution."

She looked at him appealingly as he answered:

"It is one or the other—Evan or me. I cannot imagine any other solution."

"That's what he says. But I can't bring myself to it. He was for coming straight to you. I would not permit him. He has wanted to go, but I held him here, hard as it was on both of you, in order to have you together, to compare you two, to weigh you in my heart. And I get nowhere. I want you both. I can't give either of you up."

"Unfortunately, as you see," Dick began, a slight twinkle in his eyes, "while you may be polyandrously inclined, we stupid male men cannot reconcile ourselves to such a situation."

"Don't be cruel, Dick," she protested.

"Forgive me. It was not so meant. It was out of my own hurt—an effort to bear it with philosophical complacence."

"I have told him that he was the only man I had ever met who is as great as my husband, and that my husband is greater."

"That was loyalty to me, yes, and loyalty to yourself," Dick explained. "You were mine until I ceased being the greatest man in the world. He then became the greatest man in the world." She shook her head. "Let me try to solve it to you," he continued. "You don't know your mind, your desire. You can't decide between us, because you equally want us both?"

"Yes," she whispered; "only, rather, differently want you both."

"Then the thing is settled," he concluded shortly.

"What do you mean?"

"This, Paula: I lose. Graham is the winner. Don't you see? Here am I, even with him, even and no more, while my advantage over him is our ten years together—the ten years of past love, the ties and bonds of heart and memory. Heavens! If all this weight were thrown on the balance on Evan's side, you wouldn't hesitate an instant in your decision. It is the first time you have ever been bowled over in your life, and the experience, coming so late, makes it hard for you to realize."

"But, Dick, you bowled me over."

He shook his head.

"I have always liked to think so, and sometimes I have believed—but never really. I never took you off your feet, not even in the very beginning, whirlwind as the affair was. You may have been glamourized. You were never mad as I was mad, never swept as I was swept. I loved you first—"

"And you were a royal lover."

"I loved you first, Paula, and, though you did respond, it was not in the same way. I never took you off your feet. It seems pretty clear that Evan has."

"I wish I could be sure," she mused. "I have a feeling of being bowled over, and yet I hesitate. The two are not compatible. Perhaps I never shall be bowled over by any man. And you don't seem to help me in the least."

"You, and you alone, can solve it, Paula," he said gravely.

"But if you would help, if you would try—oh, such a little—to hold me!" she persisted.

"But I am helpless. My hands are tied. I can't put out an arm to hold you. You can't share two. You have been in his arms—" He put up his hand to hush her protest. "Please, please, dear, don't! You have been in his arms. You flutter like a frightened bird at thought of my caressing you. Don't you see? Your actions decide against me. You have decided, though you may not know it. Your very flesh has decided. You can bear his arms. The thought of mine you cannot bear."

She shook her head with slow resoluteness.

"And still I do not, cannot make up my mind," she persisted.

"But you must. The present situation is intolerable. You must decide quickly, for



DRAWN BY HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY

"And now, just to help me to be sure, tell me what you told me a little while ago—you know:
‘I love the woman, the one woman. After ten years of possession I love her quite
madly—oh, so sweetly madly!’ Say it to me, Red Cloud”

Evan must go. You realize that. Or you must go. You both cannot continue on here. Take all the time in the world. Send Evan away. Or, suppose you go and visit your aunt Martha for a while. Being away from both of us might aid you to get somewhere. Perhaps it will be better to call off the hunting. I'll go alone, and you stay and talk it over with Evan. Or come on along and talk it over with him as you ride. Whichever way, I won't be in till late. I may sleep out all night in one of the herder's cabins. When I come back, Evan must be gone. Whether or not you are gone with him will also have been decided."

"And if I should go?" she queried.

Dick shrugged his shoulders and stood up, glancing at his wrist-watch.

"I have sent word to Blake to come earlier this morning," he explained, taking a step toward the door in invitation for her to go.

At the door she paused and leaned toward him.

"Kiss me, Dick," she said, and afterward, "This is not a—love-touch." Her voice had become suddenly husky. "It's just in case I do decide to—to go."

The secretary approached along the hall, but Paula lingered.

"Good-morning, Mr. Blake," Dick greeted him. "Sorry to rout you out so early. First of all, will you please telephone Mr. Agar and Mr. Pitts. I shan't be able to see them this morning—oh, and put the rest off till to-morrow, too. Make a point of getting Mr. Hanley. Tell him I approve of his plan for the Buckeye spillway, and to go right ahead. I will see Mr. Mendenhall, though, and Mr. Manson. Tell them nine-thirty."

"One thing, Dick," Paula said: "Remember, I made him stay. It was not his fault or wish. I wouldn't let him go."

"You've bowled *him* over right enough," Dick smiled. "I could not reconcile his staying on, under the circumstances, with what I knew of him. But with you not permitting him to go, and he as mad as a man has a right to be where you are concerned, I can understand. He's a whole lot better than a good sort. They don't make many like him. He will make you happy—"

She held up her hand.

"I don't know that I shall ever be happy again, Red Cloud, when I see what I have brought into your face— And I was so happy and contented all our ten years. I can't forget it. That is why I have been unable to decide. But you are right. The time has come for me to solve the"—she hesitated and could not utter the word "triangle," which he saw forming on her lips—"the situation." Her voice trailed away. "We'll all go hunting. I'll talk with him as we ride, and I'll send him away, no matter what I do."

"I shouldn't be precipitate, Paula," Dick advised. "You know I don't care a hang for morality except when it is useful. And in this case it is exceedingly useful. There may be children—please, please," he hushed her, "and, in such case, even old scandal is not exactly good for them. Desertion takes too long. I'll arrange to give you the real statutory grounds, which will save a year in the divorce."

"If I so make up my mind," she smiled wanly. He nodded. "But I may not make up my mind that way. I don't know it myself. Perhaps it's all a dream, and soon I shall wake up, and Oh Dear will come in and tell me how soundly and long I have slept." She turned away reluctantly, and paused suddenly when she had made half a dozen steps. "Dick," she called, "you have told me your heart, but not what's in your mind! Don't do anything foolish. Remember Denny Holbrook—no hunting-accident, mind!"

He shook his head, and twinkled his eyes in feigned amusement, and marveled to himself that her intuition should have so squarely hit the mark.

"And leave all this?" he lied, with a gesture that embraced the ranch and all its projects. "And that book on in-and-inbreeding? And my first annual home sale of stock just ripe to come off?"

"It would be preposterous," she agreed, with brightening face. "But, Dick, in this difficulty of making up my mind, please, please know that—" She paused for the phrase, then made a gesture in mimicry of his that included the Big House and its treasures, and said: "All

this does not influence me a particle. Truly not."

"As if I did not know it," he assured her. "Of all unmercenary women——"

"Why, Dick," she interrupted him, fired by a new thought, "if I loved Evan as madly as you think, you would mean so little that I'd be content, if it were the only way out, for you to have a hunting-accident. But, you see, I don't. Anyway, there's a brass tack for you to ponder." She made another reluctant step away, then called back in a whisper, her face over her shoulder: "Red Cloud, I'm dreadfully sorry. And through it all I'm so glad that you do still love me."

Before Blake returned, Dick found time to study his face in the glass. Printed there was the expression that had startled his company the preceding evening. It had come to stay. "Oh, well," was his thought, "one cannot chew his heart between his teeth without leaving some sign of it."

He strolled out on the sleeping-porch and looked at Paula's picture under the barometers. He turned it to the wall, and sat on the bed and regarded the blankness for a space. Then he turned it back again.

"Poor little kid," he murmured, "having a hard time of it just wakin' up at this late day!"

But, as he continued to gaze, abruptly there leaped before his eyes the vision of her in the moonlight, clinging to Graham and drawing his lips down to hers.

Dick got up quickly, with a shake of head to shake the vision from his eyes.

By half-past nine his correspondence was finished and his desk cleaned save for certain data to be used in his talks with his shorthorn and 'Shire managers. He was over at the window and waving a smiling farewell to Lute and Ernestine in the limousine as Mendenhall entered. And to him, and to Manson next, Dick managed, in casual talk, to impress much of his bigger breeding-plans.

"We've got to keep an eagle eye on

the bull-get of King Polo," he told Manson. "There's all the promise in the world for a greater than he from Bleak-house Fawn, or Alberta Maid, or Moravia's Nellie Signal. We missed it this year so far, but next year or the year after, soon or late, King Polo is going to be responsible for a real humdinger of a winner."

And as with Manson, with much more talk, so with Mendenhall Dick succeeded in emphasizing the far application of his breeding-theories.

With their departure, he got Oh Joy on the house 'phone and told him to take Graham to the gun room to choose a rifle and any needed gear.

At eleven, he did not know that Paula had come up the secret stairway from the library and was standing behind the shelves of books listening. She had intended coming in but had been deterred by the sound of his voice. She could hear him talking over the telephone to Hanley about the spill-way of the Buckeye dam.

"And by the way," Dick's voice went on, "you've been over the reports on the Big Miramar? . . . Very good—discount them. I disagree with them flatly. The water is there. I haven't a doubt we'll find a fairly shallow Artesian supply. Send up the boring outfit at once and start prospecting. The soil's ungodly rich, and if we don't make that dry hole ten times as valuable in the next five years——"

Paula sighed, and turned back down the spiral to the library.

"Red Cloud the incorrigible, always planting his acorns!" was her thought. There he was, with his love-world crashing around him, calmly considering dams and well-borings, so that he might, in the years to come, plant more acorns.

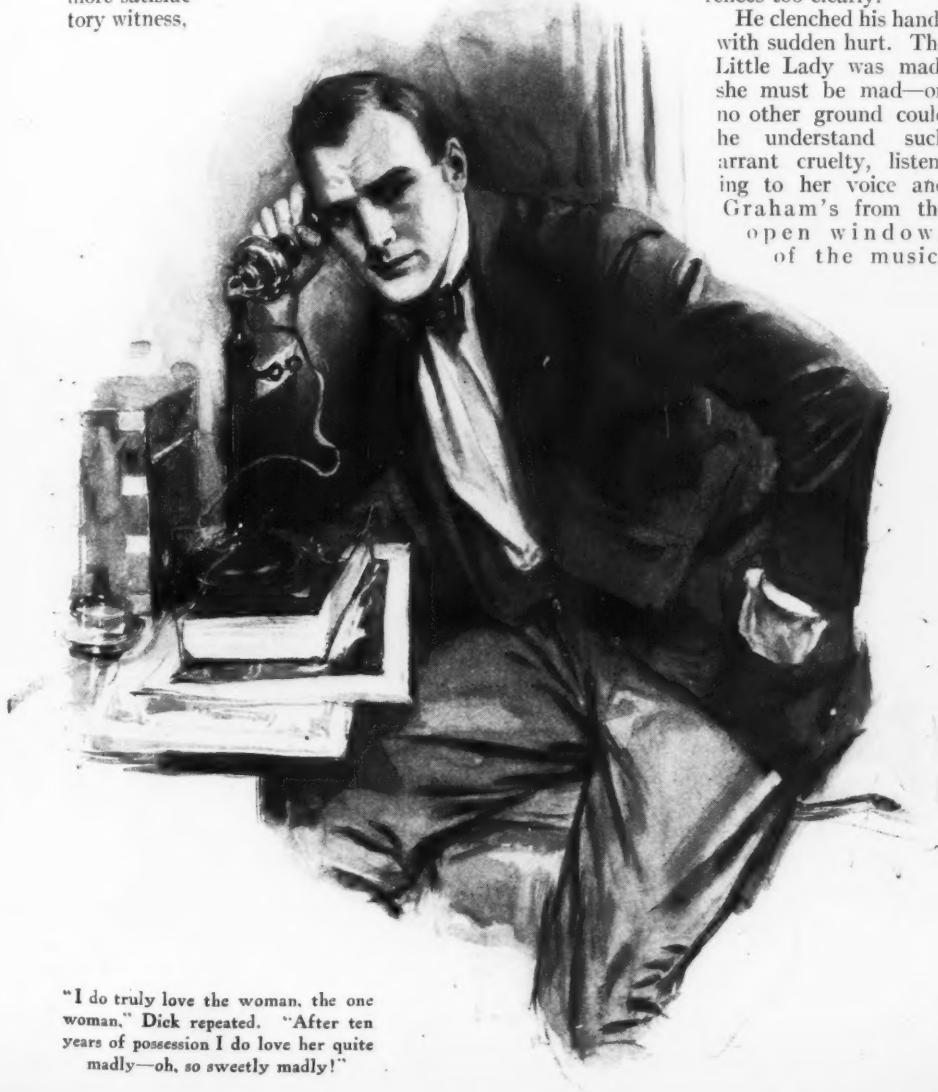
Nor was Dick ever to know that Paula had come so near to him with her need and gone away. Again, not aimlessly but to run through for the last time the notes of the scribble-pad by his bed, he was out on his sleeping-porch. His house was in order. There was nothing left but to sign up the morning's dictation, answer several telegrams, then would come lunch and the hunting in the Sycamore Hills. Oh, he would do it well. The Outlaw would bear the blame. And he would

have an eye-witness, either Froelig or Martinez. But not both of them. One pair of eyes would be enough to satisfy when the martingale parted and the mare reared and toppled backward upon him into the brush. And from that screen of brush, swiftly linking accident to catastrophe, the witness would hear the rifle go off.

Martinez was more emotional than the sculptor and would therefore make a more satisfactory witness,

Dick decided. Him would he maneuver to have with him in the narrow trail when The Outlaw should be made the scapegoat. Martinez was no horseman. All the better. It would be well, Dick judged, to make The Outlaw act up in real devilishness for a minute or two before the culmination. It would give verisimilitude. Also, it would excite Martinez's horse, and therefore excite Martinez so that he would not see occurrences too clearly.

He clenched his hands with sudden hurt. The Little Lady was mad; she must be mad—on no other ground could he understand such arrant cruelty, listening to her voice and Graham's from the open windows of the music-



"I do truly love the woman, the one woman," Dick repeated. "After ten years of possession I do love her quite madly—oh, so sweetly madly!"

room as they sang together the "Gipsy Trail."

Nor did he unclench his hands during all the time they sang. And they sang the mad, reckless song clear through to its mad, reckless end. And he continued to stand listening to her laugh herself merrily away from Graham and on across the house to her wing, from the porches of which she continued to laugh as she teased and chided Oh Dear for fancied derelictions.

From far off came the dim but unmistakable trumpeting of the Mountain Lad. King Polo asserted his lordly self, and the harem of mares and heifers sent back their answering calls. Dick listened to all the whinnying and nickering and bawling of sex, and sighed aloud.

"Well, the land is better for my having been. It is a good thought to take to bed."

XXXI

A RING of his bed-phone made Dick sit on the bed to take up the receiver. As he listened, he looked out across the patio to Paula's porches. Bonbright was explaining that it was a call from Chauncey Bishop, who was at Eldorado in a machine. Chauncey Bishop, editor and owner of the *San Francisco Despatch*, was sufficiently important a person in Bonbright's mind, as well as old friend of Dick's, to be connected directly to him.

"You can get here for lunch," Dick told the newspaper owner. "And, say, suppose you put up for the night. . . . Never mind your special writers. We're going hunting mountain-lions this afternoon, and there's sure to be a kill. Got them located. . . . Who? What's she write? . . . What of it? She can stick around the ranch and get half a dozen columns out of any of half a dozen subjects while the writer chap can get the dope on lion hunting. . . . Sure, sure. I'll put him on a horse a child can ride."

The more the merrier, especially news-paper chaps, Dick grinned to himself—and grandfather Jonathan Forrest would have nothing on him when it came to pulling off a successful finish.

But how could Paula have been so wantonly cruel as to sing the "Gipsy Trail" so immediately afterward? Dick asked himself, as, receiver near to ear, he could distantly hear Chauncey Bishop persuading his writer man to the hunting.

"All right, then, come a-running," Dick told Bishop in conclusion. "I'm giving orders now for the horses, and you can have that bay you rode last time."

Scarcely had he hung up when the bell rang again. This time it was Paula.

"Red Cloud, dear Red Cloud," she said, "your reasoning is all wrong. I think I love you best. I am just about making up my mind, and it's for you. And now, just to help me to be sure, tell me what you told me a little while ago—you know: 'I love the woman, the one woman. After ten years of possession I love her quite madly—oh, so sweetly madly!' Say it to me, Red Cloud."

"I do truly love the woman, the one woman," Dick repeated. "After ten years of possession I do love her quite madly—oh, so sweetly madly!"

There was a pause when he had finished, which, waiting, he did not dare to break.

"There is one little thing I almost forgot to tell you," she said very softly, very slowly, very clearly: "I do love you. I have never loved you so much as right now. After ten years you've bowled me over at last. And I was bowled over from the beginning, although I did not know it. I have made up my mind now, once and for all."

She hung up abruptly.

With the thought that he knew how a man felt receiving a reprieve at the eleventh hour, Dick sat on, thinking, forgetful that he had not hooked the receiver, until Bonbright came in from the secretaries' room to remind him.

"It was from Mr. Bishop," Bonbright explained. "Sprung an axle. I took the liberty of sending one of our machines to bring them in."

"And see what our men can do with repairing his," Dick nodded.

Alone again, he got up and stretched, walked absently the length of the room and back.

"Well, Martinez, old man," he addressed the empty air, "this afternoon you'll be defrauded out of as fine a histrionic stunt as you will never know you've missed."

He pressed the switch for Paula's telephone and rang her up.

Oh Dear answered, and quickly brought her mistress.

"I've a little song I want to sing to you,

Paula," he said, then chanted the old negro "spiritual":

"Fer itself, fer itself,
Fer itself, fer itself,
Every soul got ter confess
Fer itself.

"And I want you to tell me again, fer yourself, fer yourself, what you just told me."

Her laugh came in a merry gurgle that delighted him.

"Red Cloud, I do love you," she said. "My mind is made up. I shall never have any man but you in all this world. Now, be good and let me dress. I'll have to rush for lunch as it is."

"May I come over—for a moment?" he begged.

"Not yet, eager one! In ten minutes. Let me finish with Oh Dear first. Then I'll be all ready for the hunt. I'm putting on my Robin Hood outfit—you know, the greens and russets and the long feather. And I'm taking my 30-30. It's heavy enough for mountain-lions."

"You've made me very happy," Dick continued.

"And you're making me late. Ring off! Red Cloud, I love you more this minute——"

He heard her hang up, and was surprised, the next moment, that somehow he was reluctant to yield to the happiness that he had claimed was his. Rather did it seem that he could still hear her voice and Graham's recklessly singing the "Gipsy Trail."

Had she been playing with Graham, or had she been playing with him? Such conduct, for her, was unprecedented and incomprehensible. As he groped for a solution, he saw her again in the moonlight, clinging to Graham with upturned lips, drawing Graham's lips down to hers.

Dick shook his head in bafflement and glanced at his watch. At any rate, in ten minutes, in less than ten minutes, he would hold her in his arms and know.

So tedious was the brief space of time that he strolled slowly on the way, pausing to light a cigarette, throwing it away with the first inhalation, pausing again to listen to the busy click of typewriters from the secretaries' room. With still two minutes to spare, and knowing that one minute would take him to the door without a

knob, he stopped in the patio and gazed at the wild canaries bathing in the fountain.

When they started into the air, a cloud of fluttering gold-and-crystal droppings in the sunshine, Dick startled. The report of the rifle had come from Paula's wing above, and he identified it as her 30-30 as he dashed across the patio. "*She beat me to it!*" was his next thought, and what had been incomprehensible the moment before was as sharply definite as the roar of her rifle.

And across the patio, up the stairs, through the door left wide-flung behind him, continued to pulse in his brain: "*She beat me to it! She beat me to it!*"

She lay, crumpled and quivering, in hunting-costume complete, save for the pair of tiny bronze spurs held over her in anguished impotence by the frightened maid.

His examination was quick. Paula breathed, although she was unconscious. From front to back, on the left side, the bullet had torn through. His next spring was to the telephone, and as he waited the delay of connecting through the house central, he prayed that Hennessy would be at the stallion-barn. A stable-boy answered and, while he ran to fetch the veterinary, Dick ordered Oh Joy to stay by the switches and to send Oh My to him at once.

From the tail of his eye he saw Graham rush into the room and on to Paula.

"Hennessy," Dick commanded, "come on the jump! Bring the needful for first aid. It's a rifle-shot through the lungs or heart or both. Come right to Mrs. Forrest's rooms. Now, jump!"

"Don't touch her," he said sharply to Graham. "It might make it worse, start a worse hemorrhage."

Next he was back at Oh Joy.

"Start Callahan with the racing car for Eldorado. Tell him he'll meet Doctor Robinson on the way, and that he is to bring Doctor Robinson back with him on the jump. Tell him to jump like the devil was after him. Tell him Mrs. Forrest is hurt, and that if he makes time he'll save her life."

Receiver to ear, he turned to look at Paula. Graham, bending over her but not touching her, met his eyes.

"Forrest," he began, "if you have done——"



DRAWN BY HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY

"Red Cloud," she whispered. "I love you best. And I am



proud that I belonged to you for such a long, long time"

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But Dick hushed him with a warning glance directed toward Oh Dear, who still held the bronze spurs in speechless helplessness.

"It can be discussed later," Dick said shortly, as he turned his mouth to the transmitter.

"Doctor Robinson? . . . Good. Mrs. Forrest has a rifle-shot through lungs or heart or maybe both. Callahan is on his way to meet you in the racing car. Keep coming as fast as God'll let you till you meet Callahan. Good-by."

Back to Paula, Graham stepped aside as Dick, on his knees, bent over her. His examination was brief. He looked up at Graham with a shake of the head and said, "It's too ticklish to fool with." He turned to Oh Dear. "Put down those spurs and bring pillows. Evan, lend a hand on the other side and lift gently and steadily. Oh Dear, shove that pillow under—easy, easy."

He looked up and saw Oh My standing silently, awaiting orders.

"Get Mr. Bonbright to relieve Oh Joy at the switches," Dick commanded. "Tell Oh Joy to stand near to Mr. Bonbright to rush orders. Tell Oh Joy to have all the house-boys around him to rush the orders. As soon as Saunders comes back with Mr. Bishop's crowd, tell Oh Joy to start him out on the jump to Eldorado to look for Callahan, in case Callahan has a smash-up. Tell Oh Joy to get hold of Mr. Manson and Mr. Pitts, or any two of the managers who have machines, and have them, with their machines, waiting here at the house. Tell Oh Joy to take care of Mr. Bishop's crowd as usual. And you come back here where I can call you."

Dick turned to Oh Dear.

"Now tell me how it happened."

Oh Dear shook her head and wrung her hands.

"Where were you when the rifle went off?"

The Chinese girl swallowed, and pointed toward the wardrobe-room.

"Go on; talk!" Dick commanded harshly.

"Mrs. Forrest tell me get spurs. I forget before. I go quick. I hear gun. I come back quick. I run."

She pointed to Paula to show what she had found.

"But the gun?" Dick asked.

"Some trouble. Maybe gun no work.

Maybe four minutes, maybe five minutes, Mrs. Forrest try make gun work."

"Was she trying to make the gun work when you went for the spurs?"

Oh Dear nodded.

"Before that I say maybe Oh Joy can fix gun. Mrs. Forrest say never mind. She say you can fix. She put gun down. Then she try once more fix gun. Then she tell me get spurs. Then—gun go off."

Hennessy's arrival shut off further interrogation. His examination was scarcely less brief than Dick's. He looked up with a shake of the head.

"Nothing I can dare tackle, Mr. Forrest. The hemorrhage has eased of itself, though it must be gathering inside. You've sent for a doctor?"

"Robinson. I caught him in his office—he's young, a good surgeon," Dick explained to Graham. "He's nervy and daring, and I'd trust him in this farther than some of the old ones with reputations. What do you think, Mr. Hennessy?"

"Looks pretty bad, though I'm no judge, being only a horse-doctor. Robinson'll know. Nothing to do but wait."

Dick nodded, and walked out on Paula's sleeping-porch to listen for the exhaust of the racing machine Callahan drove. He heard the ranch limousine arrive leisurely and swiftly depart. Graham joined him.

"I want to apologize, Forrest," he said. "I was rather off for the moment. I found you here, and I thought you were here when it happened. It must have been an accident."

"Poor little kid!" Dick agreed. "And she so prided herself on never being careless with guns."

"I've looked at the rifle," Graham said, "but I couldn't find anything wrong with it."

"And that's how it happened. Whatever was wrong got right. That's how it went off."

And while Dick talked, building the fabric of the lie so that even Graham should be fooled, to himself he was understanding how well Paula had played the trick. That last singing of the "Gipsy Trail" had been her farewell to Graham and at the same time had provided against any suspicion on his part of what she had intended directly to do. It had been the same with him. She had had her farewell with him, and, the last thing, over the telephone, had

assured him that she would never have any man but him in all the world.

He walked away from Graham to the far end of the porch.

She had the grit; she had the grit," he muttered to himself, with quivering lips. "Poor kid! She couldn't decide between the two, and so she solved it this way."

The noise of the racing machine drew him and Graham together, and together they entered the room to wait for the doctor. Graham betrayed unrest, reluctant to go, yet feeling that he must.

"Please stay on, Evan," Dick told him. "She liked you much, and if she does open her eyes, she'll be glad to see you."

Dick and Graham stood apart from Paula while Doctor Robinson made his examination. When he arose with an air of finality, Dick looked his question. Robinson shook his head.

"Nothing to be done," he said. "It is a matter of hours, maybe of minutes." He hesitated, studying Dick's face for a moment. "I can ease her off if you say the word. She might possibly recover consciousness and suffer for a space."

Dick took a turn down the room and back, and when he spoke it was to Graham.

"Why not let her live again, brief as the time may be? The pain is immaterial. It will have its inevitable, quick anodyne. It is what I would wish, what you would wish. She loved life, every moment of it. Why should we deny her any of the little left her?"

Graham bent his head in agreement, and Dick turned to the doctor.

"Perhaps you can stir her, stimulate her to a return of consciousness. If you can, do so. And if the pain proves too severe, then you can ease her."

When her eyes fluttered open, Dick nodded Graham up beside him. At first, bewilderment was all she betrayed; then her eyes focused, first, on Dick's face, then on Graham's, and, with recognition, her lips parted in a pitiful smile.

"I—I thought at first that I was dead," she said. But quickly another thought was in her mind, and Dick divined it in her eyes as they searched him. The question was if he knew it was no accident. He gave no sign. She had planned it so, and she must pass believing it so.

"I—was—wrong," she said. She spoke slowly, faintly, in evident pain, with a pause for strength of utterance between each word. "I was always so cocksure I'd never have an accident, and look what I've gone and done."

"It's a darn shame," Dick said, sympathetically. "What was it? A jam?"

She nodded, her lips parted in the pitiful, brave smile as she said:

"Oh, Dick, go call the neighbors in and show them what little Paula's done. How serious is it?" she asked. "Be honest, Red Cloud, you know me," she added, after the briefest of pauses in which Dick had not replied. He shook his head.

"How long?" she queried.

"Not long," came his answer. "You can ease off any time."

"You mean—" She glanced aside curiously at the doctor and back to Dick, who nodded. "It's only what I should have expected from you, Red Cloud," she murmured gratefully. "But is Doctor Robinson game for it?"

The doctor stepped around so that she could see him, and nodded.

"Thank you, doctor; and remember I am to say when."

"Is there much pain?" Dick queried.

Her eyes were wide and brave and dreadful, and her lips quivered for the moment ere she replied,

"Not much, but dreadful, quite dreadful. I won't care to stand it very long. I'll say when." Once more the smile on her lips announced a whimsy. "Life is queer, most queer, isn't it? And do you know, I want to go out with love-songs in my ears. You first, Evan, sing the 'Gipsy Trail.' Why, I was singing it with you less than an hour ago. Think of it! Do, Evan, please." Graham looked to Dick for permission, and Dick gave it with his eyes. "Oh, and sing it robustly, gladly, madly, just as a womaning Gipsy man should sing it," she urged. "And stand back there—so—where I can see you."

And Graham sang the whole song through.

Oh My, immobile-faced, a statue, stood in the far doorway, awaiting commands. Oh Dear, grief-stricken, stood at her mistress's head, no longer wringing her hands but holding them so tightly clasped that the finger-tips and nails showed white. To the rear, at Paula's dressing-table, Doctor Robinson noiselessly dissolved in a

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glass the anodyne pellets and filled his hypodermic. When Graham had finished, Paula thanked him with her eyes, closed them, and lay still for a space.

"And now, Red Cloud," she said, when next she opened them, "the song of Ai-kut, and of the Dew-woman, the Lush-woman. Stand where Evan did, so that I can see you well." And Dick chanted:

"Me, I am Ai-kut, the first man of the Nishinam. Ai-kut is the short for Adam, and my father and my mother were the coyote and the moon. And this is Yo-to-to-wi, my wife. Yo-to-to-wi is the short for Eve. She is the first woman of the Nishinam.

"Me, I am Ai-kut. This is my dew of woman. This is my honeydew of woman. Her father and her mother were the Sierra dawn and the summer east wind of the mountains. Together they conspired, and, from the air and earth, they sweated all sweetness till, in a mist of their own love, the leaves of the chaparral and the manzanita were dewed with the honeydew.

"Yo-to-to-wi is my honeydew of woman. Hear me! I am Ai-kut. Yo-to-to-wi is my quail-woman, my deer-woman, my lush-woman of all soft rain and fat soil. She was born of the thin starlight and the brittle dawn-light in the morning of the world, and she is the one woman and all women to me."

Again, with closed eyes, she lay silent for a while. Once she attempted to draw a deeper breath, which caused her to cough.

"Try not to cough," Dick said.

They could see her brows contract with the effort of will to control the irritating tickle that might precipitate a paroxysm.

"Oh Dear, come around where I can see you," she said, when she opened her eyes.

The Chinese girl obeyed.

"Good-by, Oh Dear. You've been very good to me always. And sometimes, maybe, I have not been good to you. I am sorry. Remember, Mr. Forrest will always be your father and your mother— And all my jade is yours."

She closed her eyes in token that the brief audience was over. Again she was vexed by the tickling cough that threatened to grow more pronounced.

"I am ready, Dick," she said faintly, still with closed eyes. "I want to make my sleepy-sleepy noise. Is the doctor ready?

Come closer. Hold my hand like you did before in the little death." She turned her eyes to Graham, and Dick did not look, for he knew love was in that last look of hers, as he knew it would be when she looked into his eyes at the last.

"Once," she explained to Graham, "I had to go on the table, and I made Dick go with me into the anesthetic chamber and hold my hand. You remember, Henley called it the drunken dark, the little death in life. It was very easy."

In the silence she continued her look, then turned her face and eyes back to Dick, who knelt close to her, holding her hand.

With a pressure of her fingers on his and a beckoning of her eyes, she drew his ear down to her lips.

"Red Cloud," she whispered, "I love you best. And I am proud that I belonged to you for such a long, long time." Still closer she drew him with the pressure of her fingers. "I am sorry there were no babies, Red Cloud."

With the relaxing of her fingers she eased him from her so that she could look from one to the other.

"Two bonnie, bonnie men. Good-by, bonnie men. Good-by, Red Cloud."

The doctor bared her arm for the needle.

"Sleepy, sleepy," she twittered in mimicry of drowsy birds. "I am ready, Doctor. Stretch the skin tight, first. You know I don't like to be hurt."

Robinson, receiving the eye-permission from Dick, easily and quickly thrust the needle through the stretched skin, with steady hand sank the piston home, and with the ball of the finger soothingly rubbed the morphine into circulation.

"Sleepy, sleepy, boo'ful sleepy," she murmured drowsily, after a time.

Semiconsciously she half turned on her side, curved her free arm on the pillow and nestled her head on it, and drew her body up in nestling curves in the way Dick knew she loved to sleep.

After a long time, she sighed faintly, and began so easily to go that she was gone before they guessed. From without, the twittering of the canaries bathing in the fountain penetrated the silence of the room, and from afar came the trumpeting of the Mountain Lad and the silver whinny of the Fotherington Princess.

